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AN AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE OF THE PRIMARY ORDINATION HELD IN THE COUNTESS of HUNTINGDON's CHAPEL, At SPA-FIELD, LONDON, On SUNDAY the 9th Day of MARCH 1783. Upon the PLAN of SECESSION.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CONGREGATION.

They shall put you out of the Synagogues; yea, the Time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God Service. John xvi. 2.

And they departed from the Presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer Shame for His Name; And daily in the Temple and in every House they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. Acts v. 41, 42.

——— *Laying on of the Hands of the* PRESBYTERY. 1 Tim. iv. 14.

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M.DCC.LXXXVI.

TO THE

COUNTESS of HUNTINGDON;

THE

Following NARRATIVE

Is humbly inſcribed,

By her LADYSHIP'S

Moſt faithful and devoted Servant,

The EDITOR.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Holy Ghoſt, by the apoſtle *Peter*, having commanded us to be *ready always to give an anſwer to every man that aſketh us a reaſon of the hope that is in us, with meekneſs and fear*, We have thought it expedient, as well for the vindication of our preſent conduct to the chriſtian world in general, as for the information and ſatisfaction of the various congregations in our own connection in particular, to publiſh the following account of our late Ordination, the authority we plead for it, and the cauſes that made it neceſſary. We are not ignorant of the many cenſorious reflections that have paſſed on our conduct, and hard ſpeeches that ſome Profeſſors, as well out of the Eſtabliſhment as in it, have ſpoken againſt us, as introducing a new Schiſm into the Church of Chriſt, (which God forbid). For the conviction therefore of every candid chriſtian, (though we have ever deſpaired of removing the prejudices of the moſt bigotted, whether Churchmen or Diſſenters) we beg leave to ſubjoin the following Letter, drawn up, previous to our Seceſſion, and intended, both for the information of the Biſhops, and a proper Apology for ourſelves; which will beſt explain our Principles and our Conduct.

" TO

THE moſt Reverend the Arch-Biſhops, and the Right Reverend the Biſhops, of the Church of *England.*

" WE, whoſe names are hereunto ſubſcribed, beg leave with all humility and due reſpect to inform your Lordſhips, that we have for ſome time paſt been engaged in the ſervice of the chapels belonging to the Counteſs Dowager of *Huntingdon*; apprehending that thoſe places of worſhip, under the protection of her Ladyſhip, as a Peereſs of the realm, were in no wiſe contrary to the laws eccleſiaſtical or civil.

" But whereas, by a late deciſion in the conſiſtorial Court of the Biſhop of *London*, it appears that her Ladyſhip cannot authorize us to officiate in her chapels in the publick manner wherein we have been accuſtomed to exerciſe our miniſtry, we perceive ourſelves (as long as we continue in the eſtabliſhed church) reduced to the neceſſity of knowingly and wilfully oppoſing the laws of that church whereof we at preſent are miniſters, or of withdrawing our ſervices from the various congregations to whom we have miniſtred for a long ſeaſon, and truſt we have, by the bleſſing of God, been made uſeful. But as we cannot take either of theſe ſteps with a good conſcience, nor ſubmit to thoſe eccleſiaſtical canons that would prevent the diſcharge of the miniſterial commiſſion we have received from God and man to the fulleſt extent; and yet deſire from principle (as we have invariably done from our ordination) to ſpread and maintain faithfully the fundamental doctrines contained in the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy of the

Church

Church of *England*, through the various parts of this kingdom, as we have opportunity: We think there is no alternative left, but for us to ſecede or withdraw peaceably from the eſtabliſhed church; and, under the protection of the Toleration-Act, continue to maintain her doctrines, though we cannot in all things ſubmit to her diſcipline. And this we deſire to do, not from a factious or ſchiſmatical ſpirit, not from a deſign to propagate hereſies in the church of God, nor from any ſiniſter or lucrative motives whatſoever; but from a ſimple view of glorifying God, of preaching the goſpel, and of being uſeful to our fellow-creatures, in that way which is moſt agreeable to our own conſciences, and which we humbly conceive to be moſt calculated for the general good of thoſe many thouſands that attend the miniſtry of ourſelves and of thoſe connected with us. And as great indulgences have lately been given by the Legiſlature to religious perſons of various denominations, to worſhip God in the way moſt agreeable to their conſciences, We flatter ourſelves our conduct will give the leſs offence, in this Land of Liberty, to our ſuperiors in church and ſtate; eſpecially as we determine to maintain the doctrines of the former, and in all things deſire to acquit ourſelves as faithful and dutiful ſubjects belonging to the latter.

"We will not trouble your Lordſhips any further than by obſerving, that we have no other view in this addreſs, than to declare ſimply our reſolutions and our motives thereunto; and in this our Seceſſion (to which we are compelled more by neceſſity than by choice) to acquit ourſelves not only in a manner conſiſtent with our open and

uniform conduct hitherto, but in such a way as should appear most respectful to your Lordships, as governors of the established church; humbly beseeching the Great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls to direct and bless your Lordships in all such undertakings as shall be most for the glory of God and the good of the church."

THOMAS WILLS.
WILLIAM TAYLOR.

Having thus briefly and simply stated our motives for Secession, We shall only add, that meaning to go on peaceably in our present line, according to the conviction of our own consciences, we shall not trouble the world or ourselves with future contests with those of any other denomination, that oppose themselves to us and our proceedings: For with us *it is a very small thing that we should be judged of them, or of man's judgment. To our own master we stand or fall. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart; and then shall every man have praise of God.*

T. W.
W. T.

N. B. The Profits arising from the Sale of this Book, are solely appropriated to the carrying on and support of the Gospel.

A NARRATIVE, &c.

ON *Sunday*, *March* the 9th, 1783, the day appointed for the firſt ordination of miniſters in the Counteſs of *Huntingdon*'s connection, to be held in her Ladyſhip's chapel, *Spa-Field*, *London*;

At nine o'clock in the morning, the Rev. Mr. *Wills*, and the Rev. Mr. *Taylor*, (who had previouſly ſeceded from the eſtabliſhed church and qualified themſelves according to the Toleration Act, provided for the Eaſe of ſcrupulous *Conſciences*,) entered the chapel with the ſix young men, then to be ordained, when there was the greateſt ſolemnity viſible on all the congregation, which was remarkably full on this occaſion.—The two miniſters now took their places at each end of the communion table; while the ſix candidates were ſeated in the front, and on each ſide of them the committee belonging to her Ladyſhip's chapel.

Mr. *Taylor* then introduced the ſervice of the day with part of the 112th hymn, in her Ladyſhip's Collection, viz.

Peace be to this congregation,
Peace to every ſoul therein,
Peace the foretaſte of ſalvation,
Peace the fruit of cancel'd ſin!

Peace that ſpeaks its heav'nly giver,
  Peace to ſenſual minds unknown,
Peace divine that laſts for ever,
  Here erect its glorious throne!

Prince of Peace, if thou art near us,
  Fix in all our hearts thy home;
By thy ſwift appearing chear us,
  Quickly let thy kingdom come;
Anſwer all our expectation,
  Give our raptur'd ſouls to prove,
Glorious, uttermoſt ſalvation,
  Heavenly, everlaſting love.

After this Mr. *Taylor* prayed very earneſtly, and ſuitably to the work before them.—In his prayer, he entreated the LORD to give them his gracious preſence on the ſolemn occaſion they were then met for—his direction, aſſiſtance, and bleſſing on the important buſineſs now to be entered upon—and particularly for the influences of the HOLY GHOST, upon himſelf, Mr. *Wills*, and his younger brethren, who were then candidates for the office of miniſters. —For theſe eſpecially, he prayed that GOD would make them wiſe, able, and faithful miniſters, and endue them with every gift and grace neceſſary for ſo great, important and awful a work. — He then prayed for all the miniſters who loved and preached CHRIST — eſpecially for thoſe in Lady *Huntingdon*'s connection — and very affectionately for her Ladyſhip, and for an univerſal ſpread of the everlaſting goſpel.—And concluded with a moſt fervent addreſs to the throne of grace, for a bleſſing upon the work they were now going to be engaged in, and for a deep, ſolemn, and awful attention upon all the hearers.

After

After which, He addreſſed the congregation, by expreſſing his thankfulneſs to God for continuing the precious goſpel in that place, notwithſtanding all the ſtorms and perſecutions it had met with, from the many and various enemies ſince the opening of it.—He called them to witneſs (as a circumſtance they were not ſtrangers to) how much the miniſters of CHRIST had been oppreſſed, and harraſſed by the *Eccleſiaſtical Courts*, and *Fines*, and prevented preaching where God had evidently called them to labor—they could not, he ſaid, ſubmit to thoſe Eccleſiaſtical Canons that would prevent them from exerciſing that miniſterial commiſſion, in its fulleſt extent, which they had received from God *and Man*—and which, he ſaid, authorized them to go forth into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature.—As therefore the diſcipline of the eſtabliſhed church prevented their doing this, and for doing it, he ſaid, they had been hardly dealt with.—They had therefore now no other method left them but to *Secede*, or *quietly* withdraw themſelves from it, and under the protection of the Toleration Act, continue to *preach* faithfully the *Doctrines* of that church, whoſe *Diſcipline*, as honeſt men, they could not, they dared not ſubmit to.—Their departing from the eſtabliſhment, he ſaid, was not with any view, or deſign to ſpread error, and hereſies in the church, God forbid—or from any mercenary views whatſoever,—nor from pride or oſtentation, as ſome had ſneeringly ſaid, but with a pure and ſimple view for the glory of God, the furtherance of the goſpel, and the good of precious ſouls.—So that their ſeceding from the eſtabliſhed church was, he ſaid, for the eaſe of their own conſciences, and calculated, he verily believed, for the

general

general good of precious immortal ſouls diſperſed throughout the world, and for the glory of the head of the church JESUS CHRIST.—This obſervation, Mr. *Taylor* ſaid, it was neceſſary to make (in juſtice to themſelves) while it might explain to them the reaſons for their *ſeceding*.—Many *bitter*, *hard* and *cruel* things, he obſerved, had been, and he was aware would be ſaid of them reſpecting their conduct in this particular; and this, he added was done, not only by the wicked and prophane, but chiefly by thoſe profeſſing godlineſs; and ſorry, very ſorry, he ſaid, he was, that he was obliged to remark, that many had done it, who (he hoped) had felt the power of GOD upon their own ſouls—but man was man—and enough was to be ſeen in the very beſt, to wean them from man, to truſt in GOD alone.—JESUS CHRIST, and not man, he obſerved, was their Lawgiver—the LORD and Judge of their conſciences, and to Him, they ſhould ſtand or fall.—Now, ſaid he (addreſſing himſelf to the congregation) you will eaſily perceive what are our preſent views and ſentiments.—This Bible, this precious Bible, (laying his hand upon it) we take for our rule, and acknowledge it as ſuch, in all matters of faith and practice.——We have not, we dare not take any other; believing this Bible, therefore, to be the only ſtandard, We *receive*, or *refuſe*, the *Sentiments*, *Opinions*, and *Doctrines* of every man, as weighed in this balance.—And further, believing this pure word of GOD, we do, *ex animo*, *deteſt*, *abhor*, and *abjure*, that damnable, and heretical tenet, which ſuppoſes either that the Pope of *Rome*, the Biſhops of *England*, or any individual whatſoever, is the head of CHRIST's church.—This is a prerogative, 'twere blaſphemy

to

to ſay, belonged to any but CHRIST himſelf. — Him therefore, and only Him, We acknowledge as ſuch.—And his pure, infallible, and eternal word, by which, he hoped and believed they were taught, encouraged them, yea, authorized them to ordain, or ſet apart thoſe men, now before them for the work of the miniſtry.—Go forth, ſays he, therefore, (addreſſing himſelf to the candidates) into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature, and adminiſter the ordinances of GOD, according to his own divine appointment, whereſoever you are called.—Then (addreſſing himſelf to the congregation) he ſaid, this right of ſetting ſuch apart for the work of the miniſtry, we are fully perſuaded (from the word of God) is not only the work of Biſhops, now ſo called, but of every faithful miniſter of JESUS CHRIST, who are exactly deſcribed by the *Preſbytery* deputed by the HOLY GHOST, for ſuch work, in the days of the Apoſtles. — Now then he added, You will eaſily perceive the intent, deſign, and purpoſe of our meeting here together this morning.—It is to ordain, or ſet apart, for the work of the miniſtry, theſe young men now before you.—On our parts, we have carefully examined into their principles, and from a knowledge of them, we verily believe them to be men devoted to GOD; ſound in the faith, and irreproachable in their lives, tempers, conduct, and converſation.—We hope and believe they are men, whom GOD himſelf hath ſet apart, for the work of the miniſtry; and whom, we are this day called upon openly, and publickly to ordain before you all.

Then addreſſing the candidates, he ſaid, remember I beſeech you, my dear brethren, the office

you

you are now going to be inveſted with—No office can be more *ſublime*, *important*, and *awful*, than that of the miniſtry—And as there is no ſmall dignity attending this office, ſo ſure I am alſo, from my own experience, there is no ſmall difficulty attending it.—And now, if ever, in a day like this, we may ſay, LORD, who is ſufficient for it?—Your office, he obſerved, in the very nature of it, is a great truſt; this the ſcripture the pure word of GOD, declares it to be, in the titles it gives to thoſe, who are called unto it.—My brethren (addreſſing them moſt earneſtly) you are to be *ſhepherds*; as ſuch, you are to feed the flock committed to you, by the great and chief ſhepherd, and which he hath purchaſed with his own blood, in the rich paſtures of GOD's word, where is meat for the ſtrong men and fathers, and milk for the lambs thereof—As ſhepherds, be kind to, tender and gentle over the weak of the flock—here he went through the various parts of the office of a ſhepherd, and recommended them moſt diligently and faithfully to attend unto it—He next obſerved, they were to be *ambaſſadors*, as ſuch, he ſaid, they were delegated from GOD, with terms of peace to ſinners of mankind—here he charged them moſt *faithfully* and *ſtrictly* to abide by thoſe terms, and in no caſe whatever, deviate from them—he told them they muſt not (at the peril of their ſouls) in any wiſe, depart from thoſe terms—and which was the expreſs command of GOD himſelf.—He told them, they were to be *watchmen*, as ſuch, he called upon them to watch conſtantly, and perſeveringly, over their own ſouls, and the ſouls committed to their care—againſt all their various and great enemies, and eſpecially to

take

take care and beware that they had not to anſwer for the blood of any man—but boldly and faithfully deliver the whole council of GOD, not fearing the face of any man.—He next obſerved they were to be *builders in* GOD's *houſe*, as ſuch, he charged them to look to the ſure foundation for themſelves, and thoſe committed to their care—to ſweep away all that refuge of lies, many were building upon, and remove away, like able workmen, all that ſtraw and ſtubble, many were building with, to the deſtruction of their precious ſouls.—And finally ſaid, they were to be *laborers in* GOD's *vineyard* —as ſuch, he called upon them to till the ground like able workmen, and plant, and ſow, and water, and look to the LORD of the harveſt for a large increaſe.

Then turning to the congregation, he begg'd their prayers for them, in each of theſe particular views, viz. *ſhepherds*, *ambaſſadors*, &c.—and earneſtly prayed that GOD would make them wiſe, able, and faithful miniſters of the New Teſtament —workmen that needed not to be aſhamed.—— He then read to them the 16 firſt verſes of the 33d chap. of *Ezek.* Prophecy, and ſat down.

Mr. *Wills* now roſe and gave out the 45th Hymn;

Captain of thine enliſted hoſt,
Diſplay the glorious banner high;
The ſummons ſend from coaſt to coaſt,
And call a numerous army nigh.

A ſolemn jubilee proclaim,
Proclaim the great ſabbatic day;
Aſſert the glories of thy name,
Spoil ſatan of his wiſh'd-for prey.

Bid,

Bid, bid thy heralds publiſh loud,
The peaceful bleſſings of thy reign;
And when they ſpeak of ſprinkling blood,
The myſt'ry to the heart explain.

Fight for thyſelf, O Jesus fight,
The travail of thy ſoul regain;
Before the blind make darkneſs light,
And crooked paths do thou make plain.

Mr. *Wills* then informed the congregation, that the Confeſſion of Faith to be ſigned by all the miniſters in her Ladyſhip's connection, and which had been already ſubſcribed by the two ordaining miniſters, and thoſe that were now to be ordained, ſhould be now publickly read, as a teſt of the principles of the miniſters, and as a ſecurity to the people for the great truths of the goſpel to be preached unto them. He obſerved, that every lawful ſociety had an inherent right to conſtitute ſuch regulations as they thought fit for the admiſſion and the conduct of its reſpective members: that in the preſent caſe no compulſion would be uſed or could be neceſſary, as every candidate that objected to theſe terms might exerciſe his miniſtry amongſt other people, without voluntarily ſubjecting himſelf to theſe reſtrictions: and if, ſaid he, they preach Jesus Christ, we ſhall bid them God-ſpeed, of whatſoever denomination they ſhould be. But for our own part, though we are enemies to all compulſion on the conſcience, we are apprehenſive that without ſuch a confeſſion, a door would be open amongſt us for every hereſy, and endleſs diviſions would probably enſue. And in this confeſſion, to prove that we depart not from the fundamental doctrines contained in the

articles

articles of the church of *England*, (which we believe, not becauſe they are the church-articles, but becauſe they are contained in the word of God) care has been taken to retain many of them, verbatim; and to ſupply the deficiencies from other quarters; upon the whole, making it as conciſe and as comprehenſive, as the nature of the thing would admit of.

Having made theſe previous obſervations on the Confeſſion of Faith, he directed the junior candidate to read it aloud to the congregation. Mr. *Knight* then read as follows:

WHEREAS we, whoſe names are hereunto ſubſcribed, deſirous to maintain the Chriſtian religion in its purity, but perceiving *ſome* things, in the Liturgy, and *many* things in the diſcipline and government of the eſtabliſhed church, to be contrary to the holy ſcripture, have for the glory of God, the good of his church, and the eaſe of our conſciences, after the moſt mature and ſolemn deliberation and prayer, thought it neceſſary to ſecede or peaceably depart from the eſtabliſhment aforeſaid:

We have therefore found it expedient, for the welfare and unity of the various congregations wherewith we are connected, under the patronage of the Counteſs of *Huntingdon*, thus ſolemnly, jointly, and ſeverally to declare, that we do, according to the word and the ſpirit of God, believe, confeſs, and ſubſcribe, from our hearts, the following doctrines as eſſential Parts of the Chriſtian faith: which we purpoſe and reſolve, through the grace of God, publickly and privately, to maintain

with

with all clearneſs and faithfulneſs, as we ſhall anſwer to that God, who ſearcheth the hearts, viz.

I.

Of God.

That there is but one living and true God, everlaſting, without body, parts or paſſions, of infinite power, wiſdom and goodneſs, the maker and preſerver of all things, both viſible and inviſible: And in unity of the Godhead there are three perſons of one ſubſtance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

II.

Of the Scriptures.

That it pleaſed God, at ſundry times and in divers manners, to declare his will, and that the ſame ſhould be committed unto writing, which is therefore called the Holy Scripture; which containeth all things neceſſary to ſalvation. The authority whereof doth not depend upon the teſtimony of man, but wholly upon God its author; and our aſſurance of the infallible truth thereof is from the inward work of the Holy Ghost, bearing witneſs with the word in our hearts.

III.

Of Creation.

It pleaſed God, for the manifeſtation of His Glory, in the beginning, to create the world and

all

all things therein; and having made man male and female, after his own image, endued with knowledge, righteouſneſs, and true holineſs, He gave them a command, not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, with a power to fulfil it, yet under a poſſibility of tranſgreſſing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was ſubject unto change.

IV.

Of the Fall of man from Original Righteouſneſs.

Our firſt parents being ſeduced by the ſubtilty and temptations of Satan, ſinned in eating the forbidden fruit, whereby they fell from their original righteouſneſs, and became wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of ſoul and body. And being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this ſin was imputed, and the ſame corrupted nature conveyed to all their poſterity, deſcending from them by ordinary generation.

V.

Of Original Sin.

Original ſin ſtandeth not in the following of *Adam*, as the *Pelagians* do vainly talk, but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of *Adam*, whereby man is as far as poſſible gone from original righteouſneſs, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, ſo that the fleſh luſteth always contrary to the ſpirit; and therefore in every per-

ſon born into this world, it deſerveth GOD's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated, yet without dominion; and altho' there is no condemnation to them that are in CHRIST JESUS, yet ſin in them is evil as much as in others, and as ſuch receives divine fatherly chaſtiſement.

VI.

OF PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION.

Although the whole world is thus become guilty before GOD, it hath pleaſed Him to predeſtinate ſome unto everlaſting life. Predeſtination therefore to life is the everlaſting purpoſe of GOD, whereby (before the foundation of the world were laid) He hath conſtantly decreed by His counſel, ſecret to us, to deliver from curſe and damnation, thoſe whom He hath choſen in CHRIST out of mankind, and to bring them by CHRIST to everlaſting ſalvation, as veſſels made to honor. Wherefore they which are endued with ſo excellent a benefit of GOD, are called according to GOD's purpoſe by His Spirit working in due ſeaſon; they thro' grace obey the call; they are juſtified freely; they are made ſons of GOD by adoption; they bear the image of CHRIST; they walk religiouſly in good works; and at length, by GOD's mercy, they attain to everlaſting felicity.

VII.

OF CHRIST THE MEDIATOR.

It pleaſed GOD, in his eternal purpoſe, to chuſe and ordain

ordain the LORD JESUS, his only begotten SON; to be the Mediator between GOD and man, the Prophet, Prieſt and King, the Head and Saviour of his church, unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his ſeed, and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, juſtified, ſanctified, and glorified. He therefore, being very and eternal GOD, of one ſubſtance and equal with the FATHER, did, when the fulneſs of time was come, take upon him man's nature, yet without ſin, being conceived by the power of the HOLY GHOST in the womb of the Virgin *Mary*; ſo that two whole, perfect and diſtinct natures, the godhead and the manhood, were inſeperably joined together in one perſon, without converſion or confuſion: Which perſon is very GOD and very man, yet one CHRIST, the only Mediator between God and man. This office of a Mediator and ſurety He did moſt willingly undertake; which that he might diſcharge, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it by an obedience unto death: by which perfect obedience and ſacrifice of himſelf on the croſs, which he thro' the eternal Spirit once offered up unto GOD, He hath fully ſatisfied divine juſtice, and purchaſed not only reconciliation, but an everlaſting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all thoſe whom the FATHER had given him: to all of whom he doth in his own time, and in his own way, certainly and effectually apply his purchaſed redemption; making interceſſion for them, and revealing unto them through the word, and by his Spirit, the myſteries of ſalvation; effectually enabling them to believe unto obedience, and governing their hearts by the ſame word and Spirit; and overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power.

VIII.

Of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost is the third Perſon in the adorable Godhead, diſtinct from the Father and the Son, yet of one ſubſtance, glory and majeſty with them, very and eternal God. Whoſe office in the church is manifold: It is he who illuminates the underſtanding to diſcern ſpiritual things, and guides us into all truths; ſo that without his teaching we ſhall never be effectually convinced of ſin, nor be brought to the ſaving knowledge of God in Christ. And his teaching, whether it be by certain means, which he ordinarily makes uſe of, or without means, is attended with an evidence peculiar and proper to itſelf, therefore ſtiled the demonſtration of the ſpirit and of power. By which divine power he not only enlightens the underſtanding, but gives a new turn or bias to the will and affections, moving and acting upon our hearts, and by his ſecret energetic influence effecting thoſe things which we could never attain nor accompliſh by our own ſtrength: nor is his guidance leſs neceſſary in our lives and all our actions. Without his aſſiſtance we know not what to pray for, or how to pray aright. He confirms us in all grace, and He is the author of all holineſs. It is He that aſſures us of our perſonal intereſt in Christ, and that ſheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. He ſeals believers unto the day of redemption, and is himſelf an earneſt of their future inheritance. He adminiſters comfort to us in our temporal and ſpiritual diſtreſſes, by applying to our minds ſeaſonable promiſes of

God in Christ Jesus, which are yea, and amen; and by receiving the things of Christ, and ſhewing them unto us. Thus he encourageth and refreſheth us with a ſenſe of the favour of God, fills us with joy unſpeakable and full of glory, and is to abide with the church for ever.

IX.

Of Free Will.

The condition of man after the fall of *Adam* is ſuch, that he cannot turn and prepare himſelf by his own natural ſtrength and good works to faith and calling upon God: wherefore we have no power to do good works pleaſant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God, by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will.

X.

Of Justification.

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deſervings: wherefore that we are juſtified by faith only, is a moſt wholeſome doctrine, and very full of comfort. And this is done by pardoning our ſins, and by accounting our perſons as righteous, by imputing the obedience and ſatisfaction of Christ unto us, which is received and reſted upon by faith, which faith we have not of ourſelves, but it is the gift of God.

XI.

Of Sanctification and Good Works.

They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart, and a new ſpirit created in them, are farther ſanctified really and perſonally, through the virtue of Christ's death and reſurrection, by his word and ſpirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of ſin is deſtroyed, and the ſeveral luſts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and ſtrengthened in all ſaving graces to the practice of true holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord. Works which are the fruits of faith, and follow after juſtification, tho' they cannot put away our ſins, nor endure the ſeverity of God's judgment, yet are pleaſing and acceptable to God in Christ, and ſpring out neceſſarily of a true and lively faith; inſomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree diſcerned by the fruit.

XII.

Of Works before Justification.

Works done before the grace of Christ and the inſpiration of his Spirit, are not pleaſant to God, foraſmuch as they ſpring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace: yea, rather for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of ſin.

XIII.

XIII.

Of the Church.

The catholic or univerſal church, which is inviſible, conſiſts of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or ſhall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof; and is the ſpouſe, the body, the fullneſs of him that filleth all in all. The viſible church conſiſts of all thoſe throughout the world that profeſs the true religion, together with their children. To which viſible church Christ hath given the miniſtry and ordinances of the goſpel, for the gathering and perfecting of the ſaints in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by his own preſence and ſpirit, according to his promiſe, make them effectual thereunto.

There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of *Rome* in any ſenſe be head thereof. But is that Antichriſt, that man of ſin, and ſon of perdition, that exalteth himſelf in the church againſt Christ, and all that is called God.

XIV.

Of Baptism.

Baptiſm is a Sacrament of the New Teſtament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the ſolemn admiſſion of the party baptized into the viſible church, but alſo to be unto him a ſign and ſeal of the covenant of grace, to be continued in the church until the end of the world; which is rightly adminiſtered by pouring or ſprinkling water

upon the perſon in the name of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST. This ſacrament ought to be adminiſtered but once to any perſon; and we alſo hold that infants may and ought to be baptized in virtue of one or both believing parents; becauſe the ſpiritual priviledge of a right unto, and a participation of the initial ſeal of the covenant, was granted by GOD to the infant-ſeed of *Abraham:* which grant muſt remain firm for ever, without the LORD's own expreſs revoking or abrogation of it, which can never be proved from ſcripture that he has done.—Again, they that have the thing ſignified, have a right to the ſign of it; but children are capable of the grace ſignified in baptiſm, and ſome of them (we truſt) are partakers of it, namely, ſuch as die in their infancy, therefore they may and ought to be baptized.—For theſe, and other reaſons, we believe and maintain the lawfulneſs and expediency of infant baptiſm.

XV.

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The ſupper of the LORD is not only a ſign of the love that chriſtians ought to have among themſelves one to another, but rather it is a ſacrament of the body and blood of CHRIST, and of our redemption thereby; called the LORD's Supper, to be obſerved in his church to the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance of the ſacrifice of himſelf in his death, the ſealing all benefits thereof to true believers, their ſpiritual nouriſhment and growth in him, their farther engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto him,

him, and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him and with each other, as members of his myſtical body. Inſomuch that to ſuch as rightly, and with faith receive the ſame, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of CHRIST, and likewiſe the cup of bleſſing is a partaking of the blood of CHRIST; tho' in ſubſtance and nature they ſtill remain bread and wine as they were before. Thoſe therefore that are void of faith, though they do carnally and viſibly eat the bread and drink the wine of this ſacrament of the body and blood of CHRIST; yet are in no wiſe partakers of CHRIST, but rather to their condemnation do eat and drink the ſign or ſacrament of ſo great a bleſſing.

The above written Articles were ſubſcribed by us, this eighth Day of *March*, in the Year of our Lord One Thouſand Seven Hundred Eighty-three.

THOMAS WILLS.
WILLIAM TAYLOR.

Ordained at *London*, the 9th of *March* 1783.	*Thomas Jones*, *Samuel Beaufoy*, *Thomas Cannon*, *John Johnſon*, *William Green*, *Joel Abraham Knight*.
Ordained at *London*, *July* 16, 1783.	*Daniel Gray*.

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When this was finiſhed, Mr. *Wills* informed the audience that each of the candidates by ſeniority would now be called upon to give the congregation a ſhort account of GOD's dealings with their ſouls in a way of grace, in their internal call to the miniſtry, and of their end and deſign in taking upon them this important, arduous, and bleſſed work. Accordingly Mr. *Thomas Jones* began;* ſtanding on a platform placed for this purpoſe in the centre of the ſeat, that being thus raiſed above the congregation in the area, the people might hear the better.

Mr. *Thomas Jones's* Experience.

If you knew my feelings, brethren, they would ſpeak much better than I can by words expreſs myſelf at this time. One thing, however, I know, that whereas I was once blind, now I ſee: there was a time, when I did not ſee the ſinfulneſs of ſin, my own loſt condition, or the ſpirituality of GOD's law: when I did not know the value of my ſoul, the need of a Saviour, or the excellency of the LORD JESUS: when I did not conſider the vanities of the world; the ſhortneſs of time, or the duration of eternity. But now I ſee things, as it were, with new eyes, and perceive the way, in which ſinners muſt be ſaved, is agreeable to all the divine attributes: and when this diſcovery was made to my mind, I thought I could never enough meditate upon

* Whatever was ſpoken during this ſolemnity, was extempore, not from written notes; therefore the candid reader will make due allowance; eſpecially as it was not at firſt deſigned for the preſs.

upon and adore the blood and righteouſneſs of CHRIST, finding there was a fulneſs in Him ſufficient to make me happy in time and eternity.—— At length, after ſeeing the whole world lying in that wicked one, the devil, I was conſtrained, out of love to poor ſouls in this wretched ſtate, as well as for the glory of GOD, to undertake the arduous work of the miniſtry. As to my ſentiments reſpecting the doctrines of the goſpel, I need not enlarge upon them here, firſt, becauſe I ſubſcribe from my heart to the Confeſſion of Faith that has been juſt read; and, ſecondly, becauſe moſt of you, I preſume, have heard me preach frequently. And as to the particulars of my experience, I may paſs them over alſo, as it has been in print for ſome years. With regard to this connection, I hope I have given ſufficient proof of my hearty approbation of it, by continuing in it for ſo many years: for though I wiſh all well, of every denomination, that preach the LORD JESUS, yet I muſt be the moſt ungrateful of all men, if I was not thus publickly to acknowledge that, next to CHRIST, I have always found the Counteſs of *Huntingdon* my beſt earthly friend, and therefore think it my privilege as well as my duty to ſerve her Ladyſhip in the goſpel as long as I live; and as ſhe has been an inſtrument of ſo much good, I hope you will all pray for the continuance of her valuable life.

And now I beg an intereſt in your prayers for one who is leſs than the leaſt, that the LORD may keep me from all errors in principle and practice; that He would guide me by his counſel, be a ſun to enlighten me, and a ſhield to protect me, and endow me with every needful qualification for this arduous work of the miniſtry; ſo that I may finiſh

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my courſe with joy, and the miniſtry I receive of the LORD JESUS, to teſtify the goſpel of the grace of GOD.

As ſoon as Mr. *Jones* had done, Mr. *Taylor* gave out the following lines from the 76th hymn.

Let the Indian, let the Negro,
Let the rude Barbarian ſee,
That divine and glorious conqueſt,
Once obtained on Calvary.
Let the goſpel, &c.
Word reſound from pole to pole.

Kingdoms wide that ſit in darkneſs,
Let them have the glorious light,
And from eaſtern coaſt to weſtern,
May the morning chace the night,
And redemption, &c.
Freely purchas'd win the day.

Mr. *Samuel Beaufoy* then ſpoke his experience and of his inward call to the miniſtry, as follows:

Men, brethren, and fathers! I have looked upon this as one of the moſt ſolemn mornings that ever my eyes beheld. The thought of it hath made my ſpirits ſink almoſt into nothing. But as it is required that thoſe who attend here for ordination, ſhould declare before the auditory the work of GOD upon their own ſouls, with their call to, and motives for preaching the goſpel. In this I would chearfully comply, becauſe I ſee that as to the firſt particular, I have for my rule the pious example of holy *David*, who ſays, "Come and hear all ye "that fear GOD, and I will declare what he hath "done for my ſoul." When I recollect how the

LORD

LORD hath been working with and for me, I have the greateſt cauſe to ſay that GOD will ſend his goſpel to all his choſen people; and in the ſet day of his power, make it ſo effectual to the converſion of their ſouls, that they ſhall all cry from the very heart, in the ſublime language of *Paul*, I count all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowlege of CHRIST JESUS.

I firſt drew my breath in that part of *Warwick-ſhire*, where the pure goſpel of CHRIST was not preached; and till the age of twenty-two, I do not know that I ever heard any thing like a goſpel-ſermon. At length the LORD providentially brought me to *London*; where, like others, I lived without GOD in the world, and purſued every means in my power to enjoy what the world falſely calls innocent diverſions; thinking I was much better than many of my neighbours.

At laſt I met with a kind friend, who very affectionately endeavoured to ſhow me the evil of my original and actual ſin, the impurity of my nature, the deceitfulneſs of my heart, the inſufficiency of my own righteouſneſs, the neceſſity of regeneration, and of juſtification by faith only, and the real delight that thoſe who were made the happy partakers of that faith, which is of the operation of GOD's HOLY SPIRIT, did enjoy. And after ſhewing me my miſery and helpleſſneſs, he encouraged me to pray for that HOLY SPIRIT, who alone could convince me of the neceſſity for this real change of heart. I pleaded warmly for the freedom of my will, for the integrity of my heart, and for my natural ability, as others in general do, and was very angry with him for his ſuſpicions concerning me; however, what he ſaid enduced me to

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read the precious Bible, and I repeatedly beg'd of the LORD, that if I was wrong he would lead me right.

Now about this time the LORD, hearing and anſwering my prayer, called after me by his alarming judgments, big with mercy towards me; many very alarming providences and aſtoniſhing deliverances I now experienced, and which I beheld with wonder and amazement—but notwithſtanding I was under great remorſe of conſcience, and often wiſhed to turn to GOD, yet I ſtill purſued my folly. This wounded my conſcience greatly, as I was made to ſee and feel the horrible corruption of my nature, and the exceeding ſinfulneſs of my heart.

Now I was greatly diſtreſſed with a ſight and ſenſe of ſin, and believing that I had committed the ſin againſt the HOLY GHOST, becauſe I had ſinned againſt light; hence I viewed myſelf in a worſe ſtate than many that had run the greateſt lengths in outward ſin. I then eſteemed myſelf as a brute, or a devil, ſaw the LORD would be juſt if He damned me, and beheld that it muſt be wholly through CHRIST if ever he ſaved me at all; and I believe a view to GOD's gracious dealings with *Peter*, after his dreadful fall, was the principal ſight which kept me from black deſpair, and encouraged me to ſeek for mercy. I then ſaw the doctrines of grace were conſiſtent with the Bible, but I could not ſee my intereſt in them.

At this time I began to enquire what I muſt do to be ſaved; and being directed to a goſpel miniſter, in his *Sunday* morning's diſcourſe, he made ſome remarks on *Jonah*'s folly, in his running contrary to the command of the LORD. He likewiſe ſpoke of the ſeveral means that the LORD uſed to bring

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him back to the path of duty; after which he ſaid "*Jonah* was a good man (notwithſtanding his folly) for he was a man of prayer. Now, ſaid he, there is a deal of difference between ſaying of prayers, and praying; but where a perſon does not barely ſay prayers, but really prays, we have all poſſible reaſon to believe there is a work of grace begun". This remark the LORD ſeem'd to bleſs to me, for by it the LORD gave not only a ray of hope, but great ſatisfaction to my ſoul. I began now to think the LORD had gracious deſigns towards me, that he loved my ſoul, and that I had an intereſt in CHRIST as my Saviour; a ſight of which forced tears of inexpreſſible joy from my eyes. I ſcarce ever attended preaching for ſome time after but I had a ſenſible bleſſing; my converſation ran generally on the things of GOD, my old companions were then as glad to ſhun my company, as I was to avoid them, and it ſeemed as tho' GOD had "opened windows in heaven" to pour down bleſſings upon my poor ſoul, in anſwer to my prayers. Now was ſin truly hateful, CHRIST truly precious; and now I wiſhed to give my whole heart to GOD, and my whole body, ſoul and ſpirit, as a living ſacrifice to JESUS CHRIST.—At this time the enemy was ſuffered to tempt and diſtreſs me very much, with wicked, blaſphemous thoughts, and I found ſuch anguiſh of ſpirit, and ſuch accuſations from the devil about the reality of my ſpiritual ſtate, that greatly diſtreſſed my ſoul: This drove me to a throne of grace, to tell the LORD my caſe, and ſeek direction from him. I prayed in great diſtreſs for ſome time, wanting words to expreſs my caſe to the LORD, and I then unexpectedly found the following words

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conveyed with ſuch power to my ſoul, that it ſeemed as if a voice had ſpoke within me, ſaying, "Thy ſins are forgiven thee, go in peace." I was not then certain that ſuch words were in the bible, it was ſome days after before I found them, but bleſſed be GOD, I have found comfort from them. I could ſoon look to JESUS and mourn that I had pierced him, and yet look and rejoice that by his being ſo pierced, I was free from all condemnation. Then it was that I knew for myſelf what it was to be born again, to be made a new creature in CHRIST, to have his ſpirit to bear witneſs with my ſpirit that I was a child of GOD, and to be ſealed with the Holy Spirit of promiſe. Here I found that the goſpel of GOD came not in word only, but alſo in power; and I ſo felt the power of the world to come in my ſoul, that I was a ſmall time unfit for buſineſs. Thus I have given you a ſketch of ſome particulars in my experience. I am a monument of GOD's ſparing mercy, he hath brought me from the dreadful pit of conviction, ſet me upon the rock CHRIST by converſion, and ſo eſtabliſhed my goings that I can ſay, JESUS is a GOD of love; and therefore when I ſpeak of the knowledge of ſins forgiven, I can boldly add, with the apoſtle; "That which I have ſeen and heard declare I unto you, that ye might have fellowſhip with us, and truly our fellowſhip is with the FATHER, and with his SON JESUS CHRIST." As JESUS hath graciouſly anſwered my prayers, pardoned my ſins, and comforted my ſoul, ſo I mention it as the greateſt encouragement for any diſtreſſed ſinner to look to him for the ſame bleſſing. I ſhall now proceed to ſpeak of my call to preach the goſpel.

Soon

Soon after I had known the power of the LORD's word, in a pardoning, comforting, and confirming manner in my own ſoul, grace being very communicative, ſo I could not but pity and feel for the many poor, though precious ſouls, reſiding in the villages about me. To ſee numbers of people that were ſtrangers to, and in rebellion againſt GOD, and no miniſter to warn them of their danger, or point them to a Saviour, ſenſibly pained my ſoul: and ſeeing this, I often thought that I would gladly renounce every earthly comfort, put my life in my hand, and ſuffer any perſecution or hardſhip, if the LORD would condeſcend to qualify and ſend me for their profit. But for a long time I viewed theſe impreſſions as the effect of temptation, vanity, or pride; I was afraid of proceeding, and yet afraid of rejecting theſe impreſſions, leaſt I ſhould run from the path of duty.

But I repeatedly found encouragement from *Iſaiah* xli. 10. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not diſmayed, for I am thy GOD: I will ſtrengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteouſneſs." Still I was ſo oppreſſed, by the diſcouragement of men, the temptations of the devil, a ſight of my own weakneſs, and fear of being led by a ſpirit of error, that I durſt not venture. Again, I found myſelf much tempted to queſtion the being of a GOD, the veracity of his word, and the reality of a GOD incarnate, &c. &c. From which the infernal ſpirit uſed to inſinuate my folly in giving up my all, and expoſing myſelf to perſecution, if there was no truth in them; and he uſed ſtrongly to queſtion me how I would hold them up to others, if I was not abſolutely certified that they really

were facts? But the LORD ſoon gave me to ſee from whence all this came, and I was enabled to confute the tempter, by calling to mind the ſenſible bleſſings that GOD had given to my ſoul, ſince I had been made to put my whole truſt in a GOD incarnate for the pardon of ſin, and for power over it, as the ſcripture directs; by which the truth of all the above matters was proved to my ſatisfaction, my faith was confirmed, and my ſoul ſtrengthened and comforted.

My Paſtor now perceiving that I thought it wrong to reſiſt the impreſſions reſpecting preaching any longer, kindly offered to recommend me to the new Academy in *London*. I had no perſonal knowledge of Lady *Huntingdon*, nor of any of her people; yet I ſaid from the feelings of my mind, I always thought myſelf called to go to her college; but as the above academy ſeemed the opening of Providence, I attempted to go there. But the LORD hedged up that way with thorns, and I at laſt ſaw my path clear to her Ladyſhip's college. In this connection I have been ever ſince, and have cauſe to believe that the Lord bleſſeth me in it, I prefer it to any other, and I chooſe to ſtay therein:

1. Becauſe as I have been called to it, led into it, and kept in it, in a wonderful manner, I cannot help beholding the gracious leadings of GOD in the ſame; and I am obliged to conclude, that this is the line of labours that the LORD hath allotted me at preſent. And,

2. Though I don't mean to depreciate other connections, yet according to my preſent views,

I don't know of any other that is founded upon a plan ſo calculated for general uſefulneſs. Theſe are my reaſons for continuing in this connection.

As to my motives for preaching: I think I can ſay, as far as I know my own heart, the glory of GOD, and the good of my fellow ſinners, are the principal objects that excite me to be active in this bleſſed work. Theſe are the only things I can pray to live for, and in this work I deſire to ſpend myſelf, and be ſpent for JESU's ſake.

After which Mr *Wills* gave out the following verſes of the 128th hymn.

Run to and fro, ye heralds run,
Proclaim aloud, prepare the way!
Redemption's glorious work's begun,
And who his potent arm ſhall ſtay?

Make ſtrait the paths before his feet,
And every obſtacle remove;
Drop down, ye hills, your cumbrous weight,
And bow before Redeeming Love.

Mr. *Thomas Cannon* then ſpoke his experience; the ſubſtance whereof is as follows:

I have many times ſpoke in this place with pleaſure, and thought it my privilege ſo to do; but I muſt declare before all the world, I cannot ſay ſo now, I now find it a duty, an arduous taſk indeed, not ſo much on the account of being called to ſpeak before this congregation, but on a conſideration of that great and awful taſk I am going to take upon me. When the Rev. Mr. *Taylor* was

reading that chapter in *Ezekiel* on the watchman's duty, Oh! (thought I) what a great thing it is to take the charge of ſouls, who is ſufficient for theſe things? and truly, my friends, there is a day coming, when at the ſound of the archangel's trump, we ſhall be called to the bar of GOD to give an account for our preaching, and you for your hearing; then ſhall we ſtand forth as ſwift witneſſes againſt all thoſe who have not obeyed the goſpel which we preach.

With reſpect to my call by grace, I truſt I was drawn effectually by the invincible cords of GOD's love. In my unregenerate ſtate, I was bred and lived a Phariſee, my life was moral, but I was all that time deſtitute of the power of godlineſs. But behold the myſterious ways of GOD! he brought great and heavy trials upon me, which were a means of bringing me to this city, when after ſome time I was perſuaded to go to hear a goſpel miniſter; theſe reflections occurred to my mind during his diſcourſe, Is it for this I have met with trials and diſappointments? Is it for this that I left the place of my nativity, that I might know GOD and his Son JESUS CHRIST? — I remember the very day and hour, and the very ſpot of ground on which I ſtood. Then, and not till then, I ſaw myſelf a rebel againſt GOD, and that notwithſtanding what I thought of my ſtate before, I found I had no religion, and that I had been living without hope, and without GOD in the world. Now I could bleſs GOD that my trials worked together for good, and were the means of bringing me to the knowledge of myſelf and of Him, whom to know, is life eternal. Since which time I have ſeen many changes in the divine life, but am ſtill upheld. —

About

About a twelvemonth after this I was much impreſſed with a ſenſe of the ſtate and value of ſouls in general, and of my own relations in particular. I lamented the want of goſpel miniſters; I was grieved at the diſhonour done to GOD, and his word; I thought I could forego all things for his glory, and the benefit of poor ſinners. I therefore now began to have ſome view to the miniſtry, and recollecting that, previous to my call by grace, a certain friend had promiſed me a ſum of money to ſettle me in life, I now requeſted his aſſiſtance to go to the univerſity; but it was denied me for that purpoſe, ſo that I found his maxim was any thing for the world, but nothing for GOD. On this account, I now thought I was not called to the work of the miniſtry, inſomuch that I ſtrove to get rid of the thought, yea, even to pray againſt it; but all my efforts were in vain. My mind was ſtill very deeply impreſſed with it day and night.

I communicated my thoughts to a miniſter of the goſpel, from whom I received much ſatisfaction, by his obſerving, that if the LORD had called me to the miniſtry, He would open a door for me. —ſome time after, a profeſſor of the goſpel, to whom I had previouſly communicated my mind, aſked me concerning my deſign reſpecting the miniſtry; and after acquainting him therewith, he informed me that Lady *Huntingdon* was come to town, and that if I approved of going to her college, he would give me a letter of recommendation. I accepted his offer, and came the next day with the letter to her houſe.

After ſome converſation with her Ladyſhip, and relating my then circumſtances of life, ſhe aſked me if I could give all up, and put up with the

many inconveniences attending the goſpel-miniſtry (many of which ſhe then pointed out) I replied, any thing for CHRIST, my Lady. With this determination, ſoon after I went to college, and before a year was at an end, my views of the eſtabliſhment were altered, both on account of the diſcipline thereof and part of the ſervice.

From that time I wiſhed for a middle way; for while I diſliked the diſcipline of the church of *England*, I obſerved much rigid bigotry among diſſenters, which I abhor; therefore I have cordially approved of, and deſired ordination on this plan, as being of all others the moſt catholic. And now, my friends, let me beg your prayers, both for myſelf, and for my fellow labourers, that we may be ſtrengthened, directed, and taught by his HOLY SPIRIT, for ſo great a work as we are about to take upon us, and GOD ſhall have all the glory.

Mr. *Taylor* now gave out the two laſt verſes of the 76th hymn.

May the glorious day approaching
From eternal darkneſs dawn,
And the everlaſting goſpel
Spread abroad thy holy Name.
All the borders, &c.
Of the great IMMANUEL's land.

Fly abroad, thou mighty goſpel,
Win and conquer, never ceaſe;
May thy laſting wide dominions
Multiply and ſtill increaſe;
May thy ſcepter, &c.
Sway th' enlighten'd world around.

Mr.

Mr. *John Johnſon* ſpoke next, as follows:

It is now about ſeven years ſince the LORD was pleaſed to awaken my ſoul under the miniſtry, at her Ladyſhip's chapel, at *Norwich*; but being naturally of a phariſaical turn of mind, it was ſome conſiderable time before I enjoyed the glorious liberty of the goſpel; but no ſooner were its precious doctrines, together with the connections of GOD's eternal, perſonal, and independent election —His everlaſting and unalterable covenant—the ſubſtitution of CHRIST—free ſalvation through His precious blood, and the final perſeverance of the ſaints, brought with influence and power to my ſoul, but I immediately felt it my duty and intereſt to recommend CHRIST and his compleat ſalvation to my friends and relations, which I did with an humble dependance upon the LORD's bleſſing, and (I truſt) not without ſucceſs.

Soon after, I felt a ſecret impreſſion upon my mind relative to the work of the miniſtry, which continued for more than two years (before I entered her Ladyſhip's college) perfectly concealed in my own breaſt, though not without repeated wreſtlings at a throne of grace for divine direction — that my ends, aims, and intentions might center and terminate in the glory of GOD — that I might not do violence to the leadings of Divine Providence, nor thruſt myſelf into the LORD's vineyard. In this poſture of mind I waited, filling up my vacant hours with uſeful and neceſſary applications, which being obſerved by ſeveral godly clergymen, I was adviſed to qualify myſelf and apply for orders in the eſtabliſhed church. But feeling a moſt cordial attachment to the intereſt of that cauſe in which GOD was pleaſed to meet my ſoul at firſt in his

abundant mercy, I was rather inclined, if it was his will, to honor me with an evangelical meſſage, to devote myſelf and my poor abilities to his ſervice as an itinerant miniſter under my preſent patronage; being perſuaded that it is a plan which GOD has abundantly owned and bleſt to the ſpiritual intereſt and improvement of both miniſters and people. After waiting about a twelvemonth more, the LORD was pleaſed to open a door in his Divine Providence; and ſetting my mind at perfect liberty with reſpect to my call, I entered into her Ladyſhip's college, *April* 28, 1780, previouſly availing myſelf of the inſtructions of one of her Ladyſhip's miniſters, relative to the important work, together with the earneſt prayers of ſome of GOD's dear people. Having obtained help of GOD, I continue to this day (though in much weakneſs) witneſſing both to ſmall and great, ſaying none other things (I truſt) than thoſe of which *Moſes* and all the prophets bare witneſs. Alſo I can now ſay, as in the preſence of a heart-ſearching GOD, that I feel my obligations to this connection ſo much the more, by the many ſpiritual advantages I have derived from it; and, if conſiſtent with the will of GOD, could wiſh to devote my whole life in the intereſt of ſo good a cauſe. And may the LORD keep me faithful, and make me abundantly uſeful!

Then Mr. *Wills* gave out the laſt verſe of the 129th hymn.

Vain is learning, parts, or merit,
Vain the native powers of man;
JESUS, ſend thy HOLY SPIRIT,
So diſplay the goſpel plan.

Mr.

Mr. *William Green* then ſpoke his experience, to the following effect.

As I am at this time, and upon this ſolemn occaſion, required publickly to declare the dealings of God with me, in calling me out of a ſtate of nature, into a ſtate of grace; of my call to the arduous work of the miniſtry; and the end I have in view in taking upon me that ſolemn office; to theſe things (with the aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God) I ſhall endeavour to ſpeak as clearly as poſſible, and as briefly as our time will permit.

Since the Lord, out of his great and free mercy, has been pleaſed to open the eyes of my underſtanding, I can ſee ſomething of his working upon me from my childhood. I then laboured under fearful and diſtreſſing apprehenſions, that I ſhould be one of thoſe miſerable objects I read of in ſcripture, who, for their ſins, ſhould ſuffer the puniſhment of eternal fire: ſo cloſe did theſe fears follow me, and my mind was ſo deeply impreſſed, that I was afraid to cloſe my eyes to ſleep; and when it did inſenſibly ſteal upon me, I awaked in the moſt diſtreſſed condition, believing myſelf to be in that dreadful place. Theſe fears wrought in me no love to God, nor hatred to ſin, but a ſlaviſh dread of its conſequences: and though terror will never ſoften the hard heart, nor in any degree conſtrain the ſoul to love God; but on the contrary, till his mercy and goodneſs be diſcovered; yet I believe the Lord made them in ſome meaſure uſeful in keeping me out of thoſe ſins I might have fallen into; for I was ſenſible if I ſinned I muſt be puniſhed, and in this ſtate for a long time I went on, till I came to more advanced years.

I then became a moſt notorious Phariſee; I attended four or five times in the week on public worſhip; conſtantly read my prayers in private: for all this goodneſs I was ſure GOD muſt love and reſpect me very much, but never thought I needed a Saviour: I believed there was one, but I thought he was for greater ſinners than I was. So blind, ignorant, and deluded was I, that at that time I could have died (as the world terms it) peaceably as a lamb, with a vain confidence that I was going to GOD to be happy for ever:—yet as totally ignorant of the only and ſure way of ſalvation through CHRIST, and free grace alone, as if I had not had a bible to read. At that time I remember I met with a gracious perſon who ſaw my ſtate, and pitied me; told me I was certainly blind, that I did not underſtand the word of GOD, and that I was an unbeliever to that day; this hurt my pride very much, and for the injury he had done me, I was determined to ſpeak to him no more, till he had repented of what he had ſaid. But from this high pinnacle of my fancied goodneſs I was ſoon brought down.

GOD in the courſe of his providence now caſt my lot amongſt ſome perſons whom I may term deiſts, and who proved a great ſnare to me. But ſome time after the LORD met me, yet in a way I little expected. I went out of curioſity to hear a goſpel-miniſter, whom I had often heard, but never till now with any profit: he was directed by the LORD to ſpeak upon the danger of thoſe things I had taken refuge in; and out of them I was driven. Theſe ſentiments I had kept almoſt to myſelf, and very glad I was, for I began to fear I muſt quit them. Nevertheleſs I attempted to ſeek for ano-

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ther cover to ſhelter in, but in all my ſearches theſe words followed me perpetually, *ſuppoſe thoſe things ſhould be ſo?* The concluſion I was obliged to draw, was, if the bible was true, if it was a law given by GOD, who hath power over all, I had broken that law, conſequently was expoſed to its penalty, which was death eternal. Many were my efforts to drive away theſe thoughts, but all in vain; when I heard or read the ſcriptures, they ſtruck me with ſuch an awe, and often left ſuch horror upon my mind, as could not be expreſſed. I then began to read other religious books, to try whether they would produce the ſame ſenſations the ſcriptures did; but nothing could reach my conſcience like the word, which I then was conſtrained to ſay was GOD's; it went to the thoughts and intents of my heart, the commandment ſlew me; I was taken the LORD's priſoner. In this ſituation I was a long time; I attempted to deliver myſelf by my own works, but I found the law of GOD required a perfect unſinning obedience, which I could not give. I then began to cry, what muſt I do to be ſaved. I went one night to hear one Mr. *M.* preach, and he told us that CHRIST died to ſave ſinners, but if we did not perform certain conditions, the death of CHRIST would be of no ſervice to us: I then ſet about performing thoſe conditions, but the LORD ſoon gave me to ſee, that if I afflicted myſelf all my life, and wept tears of blood, it would not ſatisfy for the leaſt ſin, becauſe the offence was infinite: as to faith, I found I could no more believe than I could create a world; had I been aſſured hell would have been my doom the next hour if I did not believe, I could not have performed that, which he called a

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condition: I was tied and bound with the chain of my ſins; and bound I lay, till he who was ſent to proclaim liberty to the captives, to open the priſon to them that were bound, knocked off my chains of unbelief, and gave me to ſee he had ſatisfied the juſtice of GOD; that he had fulfilled all righteouſneſs; that he was the end of the law for righteouſneſs; and that he who knew no ſin, was made ſin for me, that I might be made the righteouſneſs of GOD in him. When theſe glorious diſcoveries were made, and that faith given which powerfully perſuaded me they were all mine, in and for the ſake of CHRIST JESUS, my guilt was removed; my fears baniſhed; my ſoul ſet at liberty; and I enjoyed that peace which paſſeth all underſtanding; I was then conſtrained to ſay, old things were paſſed away, and behold all things are become new. Thus I have endeavoured to give you a brief account of my call out of a ſtate of nature, into (I truſt) the real poſſeſſion of the grace of GOD. Since then I have experienced many ſevere trials; the LORD has had much to do to bring me from myſelf, to truſt entirely to him for perſevering grace; through various deeps and dark ſtates he has led me; but, praiſed be his Name, in the darkeſt hour, I was and am enabled to ſay, I know in whom I have believed: but time will not permit me, neither is it neceſſary now to ſpeak directly to theſe things; only to his honor let me ſay, by him I have hitherto been kept as a ſpark in the midſt of the ocean, and what I am, it is by his free grace alone, and grace ſhall have the praiſe.—I would now proceed to ſpeak, in as few words as poſſible, on my call to the work of the miniſtry.

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The firſt impreſſions I had on this ſubject, I think were in the year after the LORD had been pleaſed to give me to ſee, and (I truſt) ſavingly to experience the truth of the goſpel. At firſt I took but little notice of them, only wondered I ſhould have ſuch thoughts; I did not ſpeak a word to any one concerning the matter for a long time; at length it followed me ſo cloſe, and became ſo troubleſome, that I thought it moſt eligible to open my mind to ſome judicious perſon: accordingly I took the firſt opportunity to ſpeak to one I believed a proper judge in ſuch caſes; I could not do it fully at the firſt, but talked at a diſtance; he ſoon perceived how matters were with me, and came home to the point, if it were not ſo and ſo with me; I confeſſed in ſome meaſure it was: after ſome cloſer converſation and ſeveral queſtions aſked, he told me he would not have me attempt to ſuppreſs the thoughts, nor too haſtily follow them; if GOD called he would open the way: at this day he believed many run before they were ſent. I left the perſon with this determination (in my own mind) that the latter, by the grace of GOD, ſhould never be my caſe, and for fear it ſhould, for four years I labored under the burthen: and I believe I can ſafely ſay, that during the three laſt, I was not (when awake) one hour without thoughts concerning it, more or leſs; till at laſt it became like a fire in my bones, which aroſe from a deſire I had to tell poor ſinners the ſtate they were in, ſenſible they knew it not, and as ſecure as I myſelf once was, crying, peace, peace, when there was no peace; and if I had a more tender feeling for one claſs of people than for another, it was for thoſe who were contenting themſelves

ſelves with a ſhew of outward profeſſion, but knew nothing of an evil nature, nor the converting grace of GOD; holding, and contending earneſtly for the form, but knew nothing of the vital power of godlineſs in the ſoul. Yet I kept ſilence, I had ſuch a ſight of the aweſulneſs and weight of the miniſtry, and my own inability for that great work, that I dared not think of undertaking it; if I did, I thought my caſe would be ſimilar to that of *Uzzah*, who unlawfully put forth his hand to hold the ark; though my intentions, like his, might be right, yet I knew a right intention would not juſtify a wrong act. My whole deſire was now that GOD would give me clearly to ſee his will in this awful matter, either by baniſhing all thoughts about it, or ſhew me it was my duty to follow them; and that he would go with me, and be my ſupport. One day being in great darkneſs and diſtreſs of mind, and my deſires peculiarly drawn out to the LORD for direction, theſe words were powerfully impreſſed upon my mind, *I ſay unto thee, go and work in my vineyard*; theſe words would not have ſatisfied me, had they not brought their evidence with them; which was, not great raptures of joy, but a ſweet calmneſs and ſerenity of mind: and all ſcruples being removed, no longer could I ſay I was ignorant of his mind in that reſpect; and from a firm perſuaſion that he would be with me in, and bring me through the great work, I was conſtrained to ſay, the will of the LORD ſhall be done: though it was at the expence of the favor of ſome of the deareſt friends, and the fear of reproaches which I knew would fall upon me from enemies, I was enabled to conquer, to ſell all, and follow him, tho' with trembling. But he ſaid, Lo I am with you always,

always, and that is enough. My bodily ſtrength, (which was brought very low through diſtreſs of mind, and ſome other cauſes) was recovered, and in a little time, in his Name (I truſt) I went forth; and here I ſtand as a monument of his great power and goodneſs, of which I am for ever laid under the greateſt obligations to ſpeak, and for which I am bound by the ſtrongeſt, but moſt pleaſing ties of love to praiſe him who liveth for ever and ever: and if the love of CHRIST conſtrain, who can help ſpeaking of, and praiſing him for the things they have heard and ſeen?

I would now beg leave juſt to inform you, that in all this my deſires were ever led to the Counteſs of *Huntingdon*'s connection; I never made application to any other, as providence ſo clearly opened a door for me there, I thought it was my indiſpenſable duty to engage therein; to his praiſe would I ſpeak it, I hope I have been made in ſome meaſure uſeful; and where he calls, and bleſſes, I truſt I ſhall not only ſee it a duty, but eſteem it one of my greateſt privileges there to remain. We ſhall now conclude, dropping a few words upon the end I have in view in entering fully upon the work of the miniſtry.

So far as the Lord has given me to know my own heart, I can ſay it is not worldly intereſt or applauſe ſtimulates me to it. But as theſe things are only known to the ſearcher of hearts and myſelf, in the preſence of the heart-ſearching GOD, and before you, with whom I muſt ſtand before his awful bar, I will conclude with ſaying, if the church of CHRIST be but increaſed, comforted, or built up in her moſt holy faith, and his Name in the leaſt glorified by my poor labors, my

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deſires are fulfilled, my deſigns accompliſhed, my end is gained: and if I were to continue my diſcourſe for hours, I do not know I could ſay any more to the purpoſe. Now I have done with this brief narrative, permit me to beg, yea I would earneſtly entreat your warmeſt prayers at a throne of grace, that I, and theſe my dear brother laborers, may be furniſhed with every neceſſary gift and grace of the Spirit, to enable us to go cheerfully through the great work we are engaged in; that we may be kept happy, humble, and uſeful; that we may be workmen approved unto GOD, workmen who need not be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. And I pray that when the time ſhall come, that our labor ſhall ceaſe, and we have done preaching, and you hearing, we may then be called to ſit down on our dear Redeemer's throne, to ſing ſalvation to GOD and the LAMB for ever and ever. Amen and Amen.

Mr. *Taylor* then gave out the two firſt verſes of the 229th hymn.

Ye ſervants of GOD, your maſter proclaim,
And publiſh abroad his wonderful name;
The name all-victorious of JESUS extol;
His kingdom is glorious, and rules over all.

GOD ruleth on high, Almighty to ſave,
And ſtill He is nigh, His preſence we have:
The great congregation His triumph ſhall ſing,
Aſcribing ſalvation to JESUS our king.

Then Mr. *Joel Abraham Knight* concluded, with his experience, as follows:

When *Moſes*, at GOD's command, and under the

the protection of His omnipotent arm, had led the children of *Iſrael* forty years through the wilderneſs, and was about to aſcend mount *Nebo*, from whence his happy ſoul took its flight to GOD, one of the laſt charges which he gave to the *Iſraelites* was, to "remember all the way by which the LORD their GOD had led them:" and to a child of GOD, thoſe are ſome of the ſweeteſt moments of his life, when he is enabled with grateful admiration, to trace the leadings of GOD, in the diſpenſations of his grace and providence towards him, as an encouragement for his future hope and truſt in the author and giver of all his mercies.

Upon this ſolemn, and to me particularly affecting occaſion, it becomes me thus in the preſence of GOD and angels, and this great congregation, to teſtify of the LORD's goodneſs to my ſoul, and to aſſign my reaſons for believing, that "Unto me who am leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints was this grace given, that I ſhould preach to poor periſhing ſinners the unſearchable riches of CHRIST."

The courſe of my life, from my childhood to the age of twenty-one, was after the manner of thoſe who are "Lovers of pleaſure more than of GOD": and notwithſtanding I met with repeated checks of conſcience, the convictions I felt paſſed away like the early clouds and the morning dew, until the fulneſs of GOD's appointed time for my recovery and return was come; when that gracious LORD "whoſe ways are in the deep" in the month of *May* 1775, ſent from on high and ſnatched me as a brand out of the burning, in the very act of blaſpheming his holy name. Great was the oppoſition I met with in the way of duty, both from within and without, and many were the trials I was

called to endure for my attachment to the dear Redeemer and his cauſe; too many indeed for me to enumerate at preſent. Let it ſuffice to ſay, that "Having obtained help of God I continue unto this day," deſiring to witneſs both to ſmall and great, that the only foundation of my hope for time and eternity, reſts upon the blood, righteouſneſs, and interceſſion of the dear Emanuel.

With reſpect to my views of the nature of that ſacred office which I am about thus ſolemnly and publickly to take upon me, it hath long been my firm opinion, that the prerogative of ſending labourers into God's vineyard reſts with himſelf alone: and that it is at the peril of any man to obtrude upon that holy function uncalled. It alſo appears to me, that God having fore-ordained a man to that office, will in due time give him what I beg leave to term a threefold call to it. It ſeems to me highly expedient, that ſuch a perſon ſhould prior to his entering upon the miniſtry,

Firſt, have an experimental knowledge of the power of divine grace in his own ſoul.

Secondly, I humbly apprehend that to all ſuch perſons a meaſure of ability is given for that work, and a ſupreme deſire to and delight in it above all others, and that not for filthy lucres ſake, but from an humble aim at God's glory, and the good of poor ſinners: and,

Thirdly, I believe, that the Lord will in his own time, by his providence, open a door of utterance for the exerciſe of the gift with which He is entruſted. — On the firſt of theſe grounds there is, I truſt, a warrant for me to put in my humble claim to that important office on which I am now about more immediately to enter: the work

of

of regeneration hath I hope been ſome years begun in my ſoul, and ſo far as I know of my own heart, the leading view with which I enter upon this arduous work is, that through the grace of my condeſcending LORD, I may in ſome little meaſure, be made an inſtrument in his hand of promoting his glory, and the beſt intereſts of my fellow ſinners.

With reſpect to my ability for this momentous office, I feel myſelf conſtrained to cry out with the apoſtle "who is ſufficient for theſe things?" happy for me and my fellow candidates for the miniſtry, that "our ſufficiency is of GOD"; and that He hath condeſcended to manifeſt to the praiſe of His own grace, that "out of the mouths of ſuch babes as ourſelves He hath ordained ſtrength". As the LORD JESUS was pleaſed to ſeek me out when a ſtranger and an enemy to Him, and to call me to the knowledge of his truth, ſo I am happy to teſtify (in the preſence of many reſpectable witneſſes to the truth of this aſſertion) that He ſought me out, to preach the goſpel of His grace, and put me into his ſervice: nor am I conſcious to myſelf of having taken one ſingle ſtep in it, farther than the hand of his wiſe and holy providence hath led me.

It having been my unſpeakable honour to enter the miniſtry, under the patronage of that venerable mother in *Iſrael*, the Counteſs of *Huntingdon*, I feel myſelf bound by every tie of duty and affection, to devote my poor labors (under GOD) to her Ladyſhip's ſervice, for the good of precious and immortal ſouls; reſolving, by GOD's grace, boldly to maintain the glorious truths of the everlaſting goſpel, contained in the Articles of Faith which I have juſt read unto you.

Then addreſſing himſelf to the ordaining miniſters, he concluded thus: Permit me now my reverend brethren, and honored friends, to ſolicit your earneſt prayers on the behalf of myſelf and theſe my fellow candidates for the miniſtry; that we may be preſerved from the errors which abound among men; and enabled by the LORD with all diligence, faithfulneſs and ſucceſs, to declare the whole counſel of GOD; that when the chief ſhepherd ſhall appear to demand an account of our ſtewardſhip, we may all joyfully ſay, "Lo, here we are, and the children thou haſt given us!" Amen.

After which Mr. *Wills* gave out part of the 177th hymn.

Shall we not witneſs bear,
How faithful He hath been;
And boldly to the world declare,
Salvation we have ſeen?

Yes, if thou'lt help us, LORD,
Thy name we will confeſs;
And ſpeak of CHRIST the living word,
The LORD our Righteouſneſs.

We'll mention to his praiſe,
The triumphs of his death;
And ſing his everlaſting grace,
Ev'n with our lateſt breath.

Mr. *Wills* then addreſſed the whole congregation in words to this effect;

You have now heard, my brethren, the ſeveral experiences of theſe young perſons, and their reſpective calls to the work of the miniſtry. What think

think ye? Have they a call to it from GOD, or have they not? Should they be admitted to ordination, or ſhould they not? Methinks you are ready to anſwer, Verily they ſhould. But I aſk, who is to ordain them? Many of their brethren have been refuſed ordination in the eſtabliſhment, under ſimilar circumſtances; nor is there a doubt that theſe would be treated in the ſame manner. What then is to be done? If we ourſelves have a *right*, on ſcripture-grounds, to exerciſe the office of ordination, now is the time; it becomes our duty to do it.

Our *diſſenting* brethren cannot diſpute the point, without weakening their own hands; they cannot deny that we have at leaſt as good a right as themſelves, or their predeceſſors. For if we trace up the diſſenting church to its firſt riſe, ſhall we not find their miniſters, of that time, were *epiſcopally* ordained; and yet, tho' thus ordained, as ourſelves are, when they were perſecuted and ejected from the eſtabliſhment, for nonconformity to thoſe injunctions impoſed upon them againſt their own conſciences; Were they not afterwards reduced to the neceſſity of ordaining among themſelves? And did they exerciſe this office without *ſcripture-authority*, yea and perfect conſiſtency with their own principles? Do the diſſenters of the preſent day condemn their forefathers for ſo doing? Yet what right had *they* thus to ordain, that *we* have not *in ſimilar circumſtances?* What if we have not *every* ſcruple as to *indifferent* things that they had, ſtill if we have *ſome*, as to more important points, and ſuch as ſo oblige us to ſecede from the eſtabliſhment, we fairly conclude that they cannot juſtly cenſure *us*, with-

out condemning *themſelves* and their bleſſed *forefathers*.

The *eſtabliſhed* church, therefore, is the only quarter that can with any appearance of conſiſtency conteſt the matter with us. Let us meet them on ſcripture-ground: only premiſing, that I preſume no one will queſtion the validity of my brother *Taylor's* ordination and my own. But to what *office* have we been ordained? To that of *Preſbyters*, or, what is called in the eſtabliſhment, *the order of prieſthood*. Can Preſbyters then ordain? If they *can* ordain, then our preſent ordination muſt be valid, becauſe *we* are Preſbyters. But in the ſcripture we ſee, Preſbyters *could* and *did* ordain; for was not *Timothy* ordained, "By the laying on of the hands of the *Preſbytery*? 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. Beſides, the πρεσβυτεροι were επισκοποι, that is, the Preſbyters or Elders were Biſhops; as you may ſee by comparing the 17th and the 28th verſes of the 20th chapter of the *Acts*; where the very perſons, that are called *Elders* in the former verſe, are called *Biſhops* or *Overſeers*, (one and the ſame word in the original) in the latter. Hence the apoſtle *Peter*, (who, no doubt, was a *Biſhop*, if ever there was one) calls himſelf, in the fifth chapter of his firſt epiſtle, at the firſt verſe, an *Elder* or *Preſbyter*; and it is evident from the ſame verſe that he is addreſſing the *Preſbyters* or *Elders*, whom he exhorts to take the *overſight* of the flock; which word in the original being επισκοπια, or the office of a *Biſhop*, we muſt infer from the whole paſſage, that the Preſbyters were Biſhops, and the Biſhops were Preſbyters. This muſt account for the apoſtle's ſilence about the Preſbyters, when he is giving directions to *Timothy* concerning the Biſhops and

Deacons,

Deacons, 1 *Tim.* 3*d* chap. Why ſhould the Preſbyters be forgotten, if they were not the ſame as the Biſhops? Why ſhould they be forgotten again, when *Paul* is writing to the *Philippians?* For in the firſt verſe of the firſt chapter he ſalutes the *Biſhops* and *Deacons*; no mention is here made of the *Preſbyters*, nay there are more Biſhops than *one* in this *one* church; which plainly ſhews that the Biſhops or Preſbyters were the ſame.—Again, when the apoſtle gave directions to *Titus* about ordaining *Elders* or Preſbyters, chap. i. verſe 5, he adds ſome qualifications in the next verſe, and then ſays, "For a *Biſhop* muſt be blameleſs." Now if an Elder were not a Biſhop, what argument, or propriety, or connection can there be in this reaſon? From the whole then of theſe ſcripture teſtimonies, without multiplying paſſages to the ſame effect, it is evident that Preſbyters are Biſhops, in the word of GOD; that Preſbyters therefore might and did ordain; hence the right of ordaining cannot on *ſcripture-grounds* be denied to *us* as Preſbyters, who are now to engage in this ſolemnity.—This was alſo the cuſtom of the primitive-church; and the nearer we approach to thoſe early times in ſimplicity, the better. In thoſe days the Paſtor of one congregation, was the Biſhop; that congregation was his dioceſe; the whole dioceſe therefore met for worſhip in one place; and they had but one communion-table for this dioceſe. When the congregation encreaſed, and became too numerous for one perſon to miniſter to them in the whole paſtoral office, he had other aſſiſtants; all of whom were alike Preſbyters with himſelf, holding one and the ſame office as to the work of the miniſtry; but for diſtinction-ſake, in point of the charge of

that people, the original Paſtor, being conſidered as having the ſpecial care of the congregation immediately committed to him, was called the Epiſcopus, Biſhop or Overſeer, and his aſſiſtants were called the Preſbyters or Elders. Juſt as the parochial miniſter of a congregation now and his curates have one and the ſame office in the church in general, and can only be conſidered as having a different relation to that reſpective congregation in particular. Every one knows how corruption ſoon after got into the church; and thoſe that read eccleſiaſtical hiſtory cannot be ignorant that primitive ſimplicity was in after-ages ſuperſeded by the pride and pomp of ſucceeding prelates; who, inſtead of feeding the flock, *lorded* it over GOD's heritage.*—Having ſpoken of, and, I truſt, ſufficiently

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* The following Quotations from that celebrated Book wrote by the late Lord Chancellor *King*, entitled, "An Enquiry into the Conſtitution, Diſcipline, Unity and Worſhip of the Primitive Church, that flouriſhed within the firſt Three Hundred Years after CHRIST: faithfully collected out of the extant Writings of thoſe Ages;" are ſo very pertinent on this head, and ſo clearly illuſtrate this ſubject, that it may be no leſs entertaining than inſtructive to inſert them in this place.

"The firſt converts of every place made Biſhops and Deacons of thoſe churches there gathered." *p.* 10.

"The Biſhop was the proper Paſtor and Miniſter of his Pariſh, to whoſe care the ſouls of that church were more immediately committed." *p.* 12.

"There was but one Biſhop ſtrictly ſo called, in a church at a time, who was thus related to his flock." *p.* 13.

"There

ciently proved our *right* of ordination, we will proceed to conſider the *neceſſity* of it, and take occaſion

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"There was but one church to a Biſhop; for the ancient dioceſes are never ſaid to contain churches in the plural, but only a church in the ſingular." *p.* 15.

"The word dioceſe never uſed for a Biſhop's cure, but a *pariſh*, no larger than our pariſhes." *p.* 15.

"All the people of a dioceſe every *Sunday* met in one place for publick worſhip." *p.* 17.

"But one communion table in a dioceſe, at which the whole flock received the ſacrament from him." *p.* 18.

"Definition of a Preſbyter, viz. a perſon in holy orders, having thereby an inherent right to perform *the whole office of a Biſhop*." *p.* 53.

"The Preſbyters were the Biſhops curates and aſſiſtants, and ſo inferior to them in the actual exerciſe of their eccleſiaſtical commiſſion, yet they had the ſame inherent right with the Biſhops, and ſo were not of a diſtinct order." *p.* 54.

"Preſbyters as well as Biſhops ordained." *p.* 62.

"Preſbyters ſupplied the place of an abſent Biſhop." *p.* 64.

"Whatever a Biſhop did, the ſame did a Preſbyter." *p.* 64.

"Each of them indifferently called Biſhops or Preſbyters. Hence ſeveral Biſhops in one particular church, as the Biſhops of *Epheſus*, *Acts* 20. 28. and the Biſhops of *Philippi*, *Phil.* 1. 1. or Preſbyter, as they were afterwards diſtinctly called." *p.* 64 and 65.

"It is expreſsly ſaid by the ancients, that there were but two diſtinct eccleſiaſtical orders, Biſhops and Deacons." *p.* 68.

"On an application of a candidate for the miniſtry, the Preſbytery proceeded to examine his gifts and qualifications, as to his

caſion at the ſame time to touch upon our late ſeceſſion.

Here

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his age, condition in the world, converſation, and underſtanding." *p.* 84.

"Upon the approbation of the Preſbytery, they were declared capable of that function, but firſt gave a ſpecimen of their abilities in inferior eccleſiaſtic offices, and ſo proceeded by degrees." *p.* 95.

"Then follows their actual ordination in that particular church, not that they were only ordained *for* that particular church, but *in* it they were ordained miniſters of the church univerſal. *p.* 96.

"The formal ordination was by impoſition of hands, uſually of the Biſhop and Preſbyters of the pariſh where they were ordained, 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. he was then deemed to have ſufficient authority to diſcharge the office of a Preſbyter." *p.* 98.

BISHOPS and PRESBYTERS.

"The public functions of religion were ſolely entruſted to the eſtabliſhed miniſters of the church, the *Biſhops* and the *Preſbyters*; two appellations which, in their firſt origin, appear to have diſtinguiſhed *the ſame office and the ſame order* of perſons. The name of Preſbyter was expreſſive of their age, or rather their gravity and wiſdom. The title of Biſhop denoted their inſpection over the faith and manners of the chriſtians who were committed to their paſtoral care. In proportion to the reſpective numbers of the faithful, a larger or ſmaller number of theſe *epiſcopal Preſbyters* guided each infant congregation with equal authority, and with united counſels.—Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." *ch.* 15. *p.* 584.

"See alſo Hooker's Eccl. Polity." *Book* 7.

PROVINCIAL COUNCILS.

"Such was the mild and equal conſtitution by which the chriſtians

Here I muſt beg you, brethren, to take a ſhort retroſpect of the revival of the power of godlineſs that

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chriſtians were governed more than 100 years after the death of the apoſtles."

"Every ſociety formed within itſelf a ſeperate and independent republic: and although the moſt diſtant of theſe little ſtates maintained a mutual as well as friendly intercourſe of letters and deputations, the chriſtian world was not yet connected by any ſupreme authority or legiſlative aſſembly. As the numbers of the faithful were gradually multiplied, they diſcovered the advantages that might reſult from a cloſer union of their intereſt and deſigns. It was ſoon eſtabliſhed as a cuſtom and as a law, that the Biſhops of the independent churches ſhould meet in the capital of the province at the ſtated periods of ſpring and autumn. Their deliberations were aſſiſted by the advice of a few diſtinguiſhed Preſbyters."

"Their decrees, which were ſtiled canons, regulated every important controverſy of faith and diſcipline." *Gibbon, p.* 586. *ch.* 15.

"The prelates of the third century imperceptibly changed the language of exhortation into that of command." *Gibbon, ch.* 15. *p.* 587.

METROPOLITANS.

"The ſame cauſes which at firſt had deſtroyed the equality of the preſbyters, introduced among the Biſhops a pre-eminence of rank, and from thence a ſuperiority of juriſdiction.—The office of perpetual preſidents in the councils of each province was conferred on the Biſhops of the principal city; and theſe aſpiring prelates, who ſoon acquired the lofty titles of Metropolitans and Primates, ſecretly prepared themſelves to uſurp over their epiſcopal brethren the ſame authority which the Biſhops had ſo lately aſſumed above the college of Preſbyters." *Gibbon, p.* 588. *Moſheim. p.* 269. 574. *Dupin* Antiquæ Eccleſ. Diſciplin. *p.* 19. 20.

"Nor

that began to take place in this kingdom above forty years ago. Every one knows that when that eminent Servant of JESUS, and champion for the truth, Mr. *Whitefield*, came out as ſuch a publick witneſs, our noble Patroneſs, that mother in *Iſrael*,

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" Nor was it long before an emulation of pre-eminence and power prevailed among the Metropolitans themſelves; each of them affecting to diſplay, in the moſt pompous terms, the temporal honors and advantages of the city over which he preſided; the numbers and opulence of the chriſtians, who were ſubject to their paſtoral care, &c. From every cauſe either of a civil or eccleſiaſtical nature, it was eaſy to foreſee that *Rome* muſt enjoy the reſpect, and would ſoon claim the obedience of the provinces. The ſociety of the faithful bore a juſt proportion to the capital of the empire; and the Roman church was the greateſt, the moſt numerous, and in regard to the Weſt, the moſt ancient of all the chriſtian eſtabliſhments." *Gibbon, p.* 588.

" But the moſt perfect equality of freedom requires the directing hand of a ſuperior magiſtrate; and the order of public deliberations ſoon introduces the office of a preſident, inveſted at leaſt with the authority of collecting the ſentiments, and of executing the reſolutions of the aſſembly. A regard for the public tranquility, which would ſo frequently have been interrupted by annual or occaſional elections, induced the primitive chriſtians to conſtitute an honorable and perpetual magiſtracy, and to chuſe one of the wiſeſt and moſt holy among the Preſbyters to execute during his life, the duties of their eccleſiaſtical governor. It was under theſe circumſtances that the lofty title of Biſhop began to raiſe itſelf above the humble appellation of Preſbyter; and whilſt the latter remained the moſt natural diſtinction for the members of every chriſtian ſenate, the former was appropriated to the dignity of its new preſident.—It is needleſs to obſerve, that the pious and humble preſbyters, who were firſt dignified with the epiſcopal title, could not poſſeſs, and would probably have rejected, the power and pomp which now encircles the tiara of the Roman Pontiff, or the mitre of a German Prelate." *Gibbon, p.* 585.

Iſrael, the Counteſs of *Huntingdon* boldly ſtepped forth with him, ſtood by him, and ſupported him with all her influence. Her Ladyſhip being now abſent from us, I may be permitted to make a few remarks on this head, which, fear of offending her delicacy would have prevented if ſhe had been preſent. Diſregarding her ſex, her rank, her fortune, the whole world know ſhe has devoted all ſhe is, and all ſhe has, for forty years and upwards, to the ſame glorious cauſe. This kingdom, as well as foreign parts, are witneſſes for her. Thouſands and tens of thouſands have reaſon to bleſs GOD to eternity on her account. She has been long running her chriſtian race, and is not yet overcome nor faint, but ſtill purſuing. When I conſider how far we are all outdone by this faithful, zealous, and elect Lady, I am aſhamed of my ſelf.

I need not ſpeak of the chapels her Ladyſhip has built for the ſervice of the goſpel: I need not ſay that when ſome young men were expelled from *Oxford* for the *dreadful offences* of ſinging, praying and expounding the ſcriptures, ſhe opened a college, where ſerious ſtudents were received, educated, and every way maintained at her ſole expence. Theſe, as their gifts encreaſed, and opportunity ſerved, were ſent out from her college from time to time to preach the goſpel in various parts, to the converſion of thouſands who had been ſitting in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death: and ſo that the LORD was with them, it was indifferent to their noble patroneſs, and to themſelves, whether they preached in churches or meetings, in private houſes, or on the highways and hedges (like their

divine

divine Maſter and His apoſtles) in ſynagogues, or on mountains, on ſea ſhores, or in the ſchool of one *Tyrannus*; journeying alſo, like them, from city to city, from town to town, and from village to village; by which means thouſands now on earth, and a glorious cloud of witneſſes, departed in the faith, have heard and known the joyful ſound. At length, when *this* houſe was opened for the goſpel, it is well known that the miniſters who undertook it were oppoſed and ſilenced. Her Ladyſhip then ſtepped in to fill up the gap, and continue the goſpel here, where was once a ſynagogue of ſatan. But what was the conſequence? Her right, as a Peereſs, was called in queſtion, and ſome of the miniſters ſent by her to this place, were cited to the *Spiritual Court*, as it is called, tried, and ſilenced, one after another; and ſo, no doubt, it was to go on, *moſt piouſly*, with all the reſt, to the end of the chapter. What was now to be done? Was the cauſe of GOD to be deſerted? Were the people to be neglected, and to be ſcattered as ſheep without a ſhepherd? Was this chapel, and other chapels in conſequence of this, to be ſhut up? A *miniſter of a pariſh* ſays, you ſhall not preach here: an *eccleſiaſtical court* ſays, you ſhall not preach here: a *biſhop* ſays, you ſhall not preach here.—But whether in this caſe we are to hearken to men, more than to GOD, judge ye. We have received a commiſſion from the Great Head of the church, from the Shepherd and Biſhop of ſouls, to go into *all the world*, and preach the goſpel to every creature. Nay, we were even charged "in the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, at the time of our ordi-

ordination, to ſeek for CHRIST's ſheep that are diſperſed abroad, and for his children who are in the midſt of this naughty world, that they might be ſaved through CHRIST for ever."* Shall we then be confined to a ſingle pariſh of perhaps a mile or two in circumference? Shall we confine the goſpel-light to a few individuals, or ſcores, or even hundreds, when thouſands and tens of thouſands are in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death, periſhing for lack of knowledge? Had I ten thouſand tongues, and could ſtand in ten thouſand places at once, I would preach JESUS CHRIST in all of them. My life is ſhort, is uncertain; I would work whilſt it is day, before the night cometh, wherein we cannot work. Woe be unto us if we preach not the goſpel, whereſoever and whenſoever we have opportunity, though all the powers of earth and hell combine againſt us: herein we have glorious precedents: the diſciples of old were cited too before *their* ſpiritual courts and councils: they were threatened, impriſoned, and beaten with many ſtripes: they were forbid to ſpeak any more in the name of JESUS. But were they diſcouraged, were they affrighted, did they forbear to preach? No, "they went out from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer for the name of JESUS." Circumſtanced thus as our affairs were; one miniſter ſilenced after another, and all threatened; nothing could be done in ſupport of the cauſe of GOD, upon our own principles, but to *ſecede*, or peace-

* See Ordination Office.

ably

ably withdraw from the eſtabliſhment; and continue to maintain under the Toleration-Act the doctrines of the church of *England*, whilſt we could not in conſcience ſubmit to many of her canons, or that part of her diſcipline which we judge to be an human impoſition on the conſcience, unreaſonable, arbitrary, and unſcriptural. This act of ſeceding, as an individual, for my own part, I had no objection to when circumſtances required it; having for ſome years counted it my duty to quit my parochial charge, as well as my privilege to concur with, and aſſiſt my Lady *Huntingdon* in her grand deſign of ſpreading the goſpel more extenſively, than when circumſcribed within ſo narrow a ſphere as a ſingle pariſh; whilſt it is too notorious that ſo many of the miniſters in the Eſtabliſhment neither preach nor believe the doctrines of the reformation; but though they ſubſcribe to them as a paſſport to ordination, or to preferment, one day, make no ſcruple to reprobate them the next; forgetting that if they were *falſe*, they ought not, as honeſt men, to ſubſcribe to them; and if they were *true*, they ought not, as honeſt men, to preach againſt them. Thus the blind leading the blind, and both falling into the ditch, I ſaw my way clear to devote myſelf to the more general and extenſive ſervices of the goſpel in *this* connection; wherein I count it my honour to ſpend and to be ſpent, and intend (thro' grace) to *live* and to *die*.

Called upon then in the preſent exigency, I dared not decline the taſk, however unprecedented, and hazardous the undertaking might be, and however obnoxious to the bigotted of all parties;

but

but aſſured of its being the LORD's cauſe, looking to him for direction, and leaning upon him for ſupport, I humbly ventured to lead the way on the receding plan; expoſed as I might be to the cenſure and perſecution of intolerant courts; counting it the greateſt bleſſing of my life, that I had the honor of being inſtrumental, not only in defence of the goſpel in general, but in this place (to ſay nothing of various places beſides) where otherwiſe, humanly ſpeaking, you muſt have been deprived of it. Nor was this a mere matter of neceſſity only but of conſcience alſo; for having previouſly had ſome ſcruples of conſcience reſpecting *part* of the church-ſervice, (though I admire the reſt of it) I had declined ſome offers in the eſtabliſhment; and (with *my* ſcruples) muſt have been a diſhoneſt man to accept of the beſt preferment in it. I have nothing to ſay of *others*; they muſt and ought to think and act for themſelves: it is not for me to condemn them; to their own maſter they ſtand or fall: but for *myſelf*, I have objections I cannot get over. It may not be improper on the preſent occaſion to ſtate an inſtance or two: In the baptiſmal office, how can I ſay that every child I baptize *is regenerate of the Holy Ghoſt?* Can I think that every perſon I meet in the ſtreets of this city is regenerate, becauſe baptized in their infancy? I cannot. Again, can I ſay of every perſon in the burial ſervice, if they were baptized, and did not die excommunicate, or by laying violent hands on themſelves, that I commit them to the grave *in ſure and certain hope of a reſurrection unto eternal life*, giving GOD thanks for

taking them to himſelf? And this, though they were to die in the act of drunkenneſs, or even blaſphemy itſelf; I cannot do it. And yet every man that is ordained in the eſtabliſhment, or that takes any preferment therein, muſt declare his aſſent and conſent to *all and every part of the Book of Common-Prayer.* Can I do this conſcientiouſly, whilſt impreſſed with theſe ideas, and labouring under theſe difficulties? I cannot, I dare not: This ſtep therefore of ſeceſſion was taken on *conſcientious* principles; nor need we be aſhamed of it, or fear to look the world in the face; equally regardleſs of eccleſiaſtical intolerance on the one hand, or of narrow-minded bigotry on the other; whilſt conſcious in the ſight of GOD, that we have herein acted in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, with a ſingle eye to our Maſter's glory; ſeeking no honors but what come from him, nor ambitious of any preferments, but the reproach of his croſs: If He is but with us, we want nothing more. — But it may be aſked, Why do you then uſe any part of the ſervice of the church from which you have ſeceded? I anſwer, becauſe though we object to *ſome* part of it, we do not to *all:* Nay we like very much of it, particularly that part which we uſe in the morning and evening ſervice. The majority of our congregation too in general like to join in it. Nor is *our* conduct herein more inconſiſtent with our ſeceding principles or profeſſion, than was that of our *reformers*, who extracted much of our *preſent* church-ſervice from the *Romiſh liturgy*; they took what they thought the *good* with them, and left the *bad:* ſo have *we* now.

Thus,

Thus, my dear brethren, I have endeavoured clearly to ſtate the whole matter before you, and to obviate every objection; I confeſs it has been *unpremeditated*, upon the whole; but ſince I came into the chapel, it ſtruck me forcibly, that upon this occaſion it was proper, and indeed expedient, to inform you not only of the nature and neceſſity of the ſeceſſion, but of all the other ſteps I have taken notice of, leading to it, and conſequent upon it; and this plainly and explicitly, in order to juſtify our proceedings herein in the ſight of GOD and man. Truſting, therefore, my attempt to do it has been attended with conviction to your minds; and requeſting your forgiveneſs for taking up ſo much of your time on a ſubject, wherein ſo inſignificant a perſon as myſelf is immediately concerned, having never before had ſuch a *public* call for it; we will proceed to the farther buſineſs before us.

He then engaged in prayer ſuitable to the ordination immediately to take place; wherein he prayed the LORD, who was aſcended up on high, and gives gifts unto men, particularly paſtors and teachers, for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry, and for the edifying of the body of CHRIST, that He would be graciouſly pleaſed to endue theſe young perſons, now to be ſet apart to the work of the miniſtry, with the gifts and grace of the HOLY SPIRIT; that they might not only be priviledged with the laying on of hands, but that a divine unction might be poured out upon them: making them

able miniſters of the New Teſtament; not ſuffering them to be aſhamed of the goſpel of CHRIST, or ſhunning to declare the whole counſel of GOD; but wiſe to win ſouls, and abundantly ſucceſsful in whatſoever part of the vineyard they may be called to labour; determining, through grace, to ſpend and be ſpent in the Redeemer's ſervice; concluding his prayer in words to this effect, "LORD, without Thee we cannot go, but let thy preſence be with us, and we will go. Here in the face of this congregation, we dedicate afreſh our bodies, ſouls, and ſpirits to thy ſervice. Bleſs, O bleſs us with ſimplicity and faithfulneſs, with zeal and ſucceſs; and Thou ſhalt have all the praiſe and glory, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, now and for evermore, Amen."

Mr. *Wills* and Mr. *Taylor* then proceeded to the laying on of hands on the head of each candidate according to ſeniority, putting the Bible into the hand of each perſon ſucceſſively; and alternately, addreſſed them one by one, ſaying, "Take thou "authority to preach the word of GOD, and to "adminiſter His appointed ordinances, in the "name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and "of the HOLY GHOST."

Mr. *Taylor* then gave out the laſt verſe of the 108th hymn.

Give reward of grace and glory,
To thy faithful labourers dear;

Let

Let the incenſe of our hearts be
Offered up in faith and prayer.
Bleſs, O bleſs them; bleſs, O bleſs them
Now, henceforth, for evermore.

Theſe laſt words, *Bleſs, O bleſs them*, were ſung with great life, and attended with uncommon power; every perſon ſeeming to join heartily in the petition, and ſweetly ſinging it over repeatedly.

Mr. *Wills* then gave the ordination-charge, which was grounded on St. *Paul*'s exhortation to *Timothy*, firſt Epiſtle, 4th Chapter, 16th Verſe. "Take heed unto thyſelf, and to thy doctrine: "continue in them; for, in doing this, thou "ſhalt both ſave thyſelf, and them that hear "thee."

Having premiſed that, as they were now publickly and ſolemnly ſet apart for the more immediate ſervice of GOD in the work of the miniſtry, he ſaid, it laid upon him (his dear brother *Taylor* having declined this part of the office) to give them a word of exhortation ſuitable to the important occaſion, which he ſhould deduce from the paſſage juſt cited. From whence he took occaſion to obſerve,

I. That they were to take heed to *themſelves*.

1. Reſpecting the work of grace on their own hearts, and ſecret communion with GOD. Here he obſerved, that he truſted, from what he and others

knew of them, as well as from their own declarations, that there was no reaſon to doubt the LORD had begun and was carrying on a work of grace, effectual ſaving grace within them. He therefore urged upon them the neceſſity of diligence in private exerciſes, in order to a growth in grace and perſonal holineſs; that they were to lie low at the feet of *his* maſter and *their* maſter, that under an humbling ſenſe of their own inſufficiency, and of his love, power and faithfulneſs, they might feel and acknowledge with the apoſtle, in life, and death, "By the grace of GOD I am what I am."

2. In regard to their private ſtudies. That they ſhould remember they had a great work before them, and might well cry out with St. *Paul*, "Who is ſufficient for theſe things?" Therefore, in order to be workmen that need not to be aſhamed, they muſt not only be diligent in their ſtudies and preparations for their miniſtrations, not only be conſtant in reading and meditating on the Holy Scriptures contained in that divine and beſt of all books, *the Bible*; but, above all, be praying for that wiſdom that cometh down from above, and the continual influences of that Spirit, who alone can guide us into all truth. That it is not by the learning of the ſchools and philoſophy (however uſeful in their place) but by the ſecret and powerful illumination and teachings of GOD the HOLY GHOST, they would diſcern ſpiritual things, underſtand the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven, and become able miniſters of the New Teſtament; then, though they were illiterate, like *Peter* and the reſt of the apoſtolic fiſhermen, yet like *Peter* and his brethren,

they

they might ſtand before councils, and not be aſhamed; yea, with the ſame power of GOD reſting upon them, they would confound their adverſaries and put them to ſilence.

3. Reſpecting their conduct. That they were not to be one thing in the pulpit, and another thing out of it. But that it became them, yea it was incumbent upon them to adorn the doctrine of GOD their SAVIOR in all things; and not only to bring no reproach upon the goſpel by a looſe walk, but in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity to have their converſation in the world; that they might be blameleſs and harmleſs, the ſons of GOD, without rebuke, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation, amongſt whom they ſhould ſhine as lights in the world. That whilſt they preached about the fruits of the ſpirit, they were not to contradict that doctrine in their lives — not to be heady and high minded, but walk in all lowlineſs and humility; not lording it over GOD's heritage, or making a wretched diſtinction between rich and poor, in *ſpiritual* concerns; foraſmuch as with the LORD there is no reſpect of perſons; but the ſoul of a beggar is as precious in his ſight, as that of a prince. That they were not to court worldly careſſes, nor be deterred by worldly fears; but that they ſhould tread the ſmiles of the world under one foot, and the frowns of it under the other; in a word, they were to be in all things examples to the flock.

II. They were to take heed to their *doctrine*; both as to the *matter* of it, and the *manner* in which it ſhould be delivered.

1. As to the *matter* of it. That it ſhould conſiſt of all the truths of the goſpel, and that they ſhould not ſhun to declare the whole counſel of GOD. That as they could not prize the LORD, our Covenant-GOD, too *high*, they were to declare ſovereign grace and mercy to be the ſource of every bleſſing in time and eternity; and the everlaſting love of GOD to be that river, the ſtreams whereof make glad the city of our GOD: neither could they debaſe the creature too *low*. They were to inſiſt on every man being defiled by *Adam*'s ſin, and chargeable with *Adam*'s guilt, by whoſe diſobedience all were made ſinners, and are now born in iniquity. They were to hold forth therefore as well the doctrine of original as of actual ſin, and that all were become guilty before GOD, nor can in their natural and apoſtate ſtate be farther from GOD, without being in hell. But that, though they have deſtroyed themſelves, there is help for the deſtitute, and mercy for the miſerable, in JEHOVAH-JESUS, the LORD our Righteouſneſs. Here they were to maintain the eſſential glorious doctrine of his Godhead againſt all Arians and Socinians: for if he be only a creature, yea if he be not *the mighty* GOD, GOD *over all bleſſed for ever*, yea if *the fulneſs of the Godhead* did not dwell in him bodily, there is an end of all our hopes; our ſalvation falls to the ground; and our ſtate is as deſperate as that of the devils, for whom there is no remedy. The union therefore of his divine and human nature in one perſon, the virtue of his blood for atonement, and the compleatneſs of his obedience for juſtification, muſt be ever in view in all their diſcourſes. But

whilſt

whilſt they are inſiſting on the one hand on juſtification by faith alone, againſt the *Arminian* leaven, of mixing faith and works, grace and free will, CHRIST and the creature: they ſhould bear their continual teſtimony againſt the abominable doctrine of *Antinomians*, who would turn the grace of GOD into wantonneſs, and make CHRIST the miniſter of ſin. I tremble (he ſaid) at *their* horrid tenets; this doctrine of devils, as it came from hell, leads alſo back to hell. Therefore maintain the neceſſity of a new birth and regeneration of the Spirit of GOD; becauſe no one can be in JESUS CHRIST without being a new creature, no one can enter into the kingdom of GOD without being born again of the HOLY GHOST. His influences therefore muſt be ever urged, and his various offices held forth as eſſential to the experience of a child of GOD, whether in enlightening and convincing, converting and ſanctifying, comforting, witneſſing, and ſealing the elect to the day of redemption. Forget not the neceſſity of the Spirit's application of the promiſes to the heart, and be not aſhamed to declare his witneſſing with our ſpirits that we are the children of GOD.

And, (to dwell no longer on particulars) preach the glorious doctrine of final perſeverance; and in oppoſition to any, who hold that we may be children of GOD to day, and of the devil to-morrow; that we may be partakers of grace to day, and be caſt into hell to-morrow; take care that ye declare that none ſhall be able to pluck CHRIST's ſheep out of his hand, nor ſeparate them from his love; that where He is, they ſhall be alſo; that be-

cauſe

cauſe He lives, they ſhall live alſo; and that all thoſe whom the FATHER hath given him ſhall in the appointed time receive the kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world; becauſe whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called, and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified, and whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified. This is to determine to know nothing but JESUS CHRIST and him crucified; to glory in nothing but the croſs of CHRIST; to preach not yourſelves, but CHRIST JESUS the LORD.

Laſtly, as to their *manner* of preaching.

That it be *ſimple*, not with enticing words of man's wiſdom; nor to uſe ſuch language as the common people, which make up the bulk of the congregations, cannot underſtand. That they ſhould particularly guard againſt this ſnare, as pride is ſo apt to creep *into* the pulpit, as well as to follow the preacher when he *comes out* of it. In this reſpect, ſaid he, I would rather unlearn what I have acquired in the ſchools of literature and of ſcience, than ſpeak to the people as it were in an unknown tongue. It would be wretched trifling to cry **Ignis*, if your neighbour's houſe were on fire at midnight. Therefore he beſought them, for GOD's ſake, and for precious ſouls ſake, to be plain, honeſt, faithful; not to corrupt the word of GOD, handling it deceitfully, but by manifeſtation of the truth commending themſelves to every man's

* The Latin word for fire.

con-

conſcience in the ſight of GOD. —— That their preaching ſhould be *experimental*, remembering that head-knowledge was of no avail, that ſpeculative religion and mere opinions, however orthodox, would never carry one ſoul to heaven, but an heart-felt experimental knowledge of the truth as it is in JESUS, by the teaching of the HOLY GHOST; ſeeing the kingdom of GOD in the hearts of his people is not in word only, but alſo in power, and in the HOLY GHOST, and in much aſſurance. —— That it ſhould be *zealouſly* and *affectionately*, not with indifference or coldneſs, but with an earneſtneſs and energy becoming the importance of the ſubject, and a tenderneſs of addreſs, proving moſt effectually that the love of ſouls was moſt deeply at heart. This, ſaid he, is the preaching GOD will bleſs; and whilſt you are going out of ſelf and reſting on JESUS, the more unction from above you may expect, and the more ſucceſs will attend your labours. That though they were not to deſpiſe human learning in its proper place, they ſhould count it their higheſt privilege (with *Mary*) to ſit at the Maſter's feet, and thus would they become ſcribes inſtructed to the kingdom of heaven. That they muſt indeed be reproached and perſecuted, and (what would be found hardeſt to fleſh and blood,) be counted fools for CHRIST's ſake; but if the Lord ſmiles, let the world frown: the apoſtles were even forbad to ſpeak in the name of JESUS; and ſome of our brethren, ſaid he, have been forbidden to ſpeak from *this* pulpit; but whilſt the LORD is on our ſide, we have nothing to fear, yea, we rejoice,

joice, and will rejoice. There is a day coming when our enemies ſhall be put to ſilence, and God will avenge his own cauſe, and publickly own his own people: nay, and He will be with them to the end of the world. Arduous, therefore, as the work is, he obſerved, they were aſſured of His aſſiſting, protecting, and bleſſing them in it here; and when the Chief Shepherd ſhall appear, they ſhould receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. With theſe views, how could they but be faithful? Yea, ſays he, every word yourſelves have declared to day, every member of this congregation, every ſtone of this building will witneſs againſt you, if you are found unfaithful to the office you have now taken upon you. But I hope better things of you, and things which accompany ſalvation; wherefore I conclude with the apoſtle's words, "And now, brethren, I "commend you to God, and to the word of "his grace, which is able to build you up, and "to give you an inheritance among all them "which are ſanctified."

The charge being ended, and it being now two o'clock, the ſervice having already taken up five hours (though the utmoſt eagerneſs of attention and ſolemnity in the congregation, continued to the laſt) it was thought expedient to defer the ſermon which was to have been preached by Mr. *Taylor*, till the evening; and to diſmiſs the people in general for the preſent, with a ſhort prayer and the uſual benediction, after ſinging the 287th hymn;

Bleſſings

Bleſſings for ever on the LAMB,
Who bore the curſe for wretched man;
Let angels ſound his ſacred name,
And every creature ſay Amen.

The communion was immediately after adminiſtered to thoſe that remained, the young miniſters receiving firſt, then the congregation. Thus concluded the whole ſervice on this moſt ſolemn occaſion; wherein much of the preſence of the LORD was experienced by the people in general; many bleſſings were beſtowed by the great BISHOP and HEAD of the church; and all acknowledged it to have been *one of the days of the ſon of man*, never to be forgotten by them to all eternity.

POSTSCRIPT.

HAVING thus briefly and clearly ſtated the proceedings of the firſt Ordination, in her Ladyſhip's connection, which were not at the time intended for the preſs, but which (having been ſince called to it) we have not ſcrupled to declare in the face of the whole world, reſpecting the nature and the motives of our conduct on this important occaſion; Though we have ever determined not to enter the field of controverſy, we would beg leave juſt ſimply to ſubjoin, in the ſpirit of meekneſs, an obſervation or two, by way of anſwer to the objections of *ſome*, and for farther information to *all* our readers.

1. Having been ſneeringly called *Apoſtles*, for ſuppoſing we have any thing to do with the unlimited commiſſion given by Chriſt to his apoſtles, and for not confining ourſelves to one

particular

particular congregation, we anſwer, That our Lord, in order to authorize and confirm, yea to perpetuate the various rights and privileges of his church, has granted them this Charter; "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth; go ye "therefore (depending on this my power, and back'd by my "authority, into all the world; ſome into one place, and ſome "into another) and teach all nations, &c. and Lo! I am with "you alway, even unto the end of the world." Muſt not this commiſſion therefore extend, not only to the then Apoſtles, but to all their ſucceſſors in the miniſtry of the goſpel, through all ages, to the end of the world; with a promiſe of his ſpiritual preſence at all times to protect, and direct, and bleſs them in their labours? For the apoſtles were not to live to the end of the world: but as Chriſt would have a church, ſo would he have miniſters appointed for it, to the end of the world.—Therefore we maintain, that this commiſſion, and this promiſe (miracles excepted) as much belong to their ſucceſſors as to the apoſtles themſelves; and hence by this warrant we do, and will, by the Grace of God, act to the end of our lives. It is by virtue of this particular order from Chriſt, that the church *ſtill* remains inſtated in thoſe privileges, and in that power which it had at *firſt*. The offices are the ſame, and the divine authority by which we act is the ſame. And though according to the cuſtom of the primitive church, (as we have already obſerved page 56. ſecond paragraph, in the notes) we do not ordain any *for* any *particular* church, but *in* it for the church *univerſal*; yet whether the providence of God may afterwards think fit to employ their ſervices in the peculiar care of particular churches, or in the miniſtration of the goſpel at large; journeying from place to place, proclaiming free, full, and everlaſting ſalvation through the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, in Cities, Towns, and Villages, to call in God's elect, to ſettle churches in various places, and to feed his flock, thouſands and ten thouſands of whom would otherwiſe be as ſheep without a ſhepherd; We ſay, in whatſoever way the Great Head of the Church is pleaſed to employ us, and whitherſoever to ſend us, we have a right to expect and to depend upon his preſence and bleſſing; and we, as well as the apoſtles before us, and our ſucceſſors after us, are equally intereſted in this commiſſion, *to the End of the World.*

2. It

2. Is it right that any ſhould preach, as the ſtudents do, who are candidates for the miniſtry, before they are ordained? We anſwer, Yes, and that this is as well the cuſtom of the Proteſtant churches abroad, as it is our's in the Seceſſion, and moreover was undoubtedly practiſed in the primitive church. That theſe did ſo, appears from a memorable hiſtory concerning Origen, who going from *Alexandria* into *Paleſtina*, by the deſire of the biſhops of that country, publickly preached in the church, and expounded the holy ſcriptures, though he was not yet in holy orders. At which action, when *Demetrius*, biſhop of *Alexandria* was offended, *Alexander* biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, and *Theoctiſtus* of *Cæſarea* writ to him in defence of it as followeth, "Whereas you write in your letter, that it was never before "ſeen or done, that laymen ſhould preach in the preſence of bi-"ſhops, therein *you wander from the truth*; for whereſoever any "are found that are fit to profit the brethren, the holy biſhops "of their own accord aſk them to preach unto the people." See Lord Chancellor *King* on the primitive church. And as to the cuſtom of the foreign proteſtant churches at this day, I have now a teſtimonial before me, from the univerſity of *Halle*, in the dutchy of *Magdeburg*, in *Germany*, and in the dominions of the king of *Pruſſia*, lately ſigned officially by the public profeſſor of divinity, of which the following is an Extract, viz. "He (the candidate for orders) has alſo, according to the "cuſtom of our univerſity, exerciſed himſelf at various times "in preaching, where I obſerved ſo much ſerioufneſs, and ſo "many excellent gifts, that I moſt aſſuredly believe that he "will be able by the bleſſing of God, to be of great uſe in a "congregation:" and whether this is not (to ſay the leaſt) a more rational way to try their gifts and grace, and to prove their call from God to the work of the miniſtry, than to admit them indiſcriminately, without ſuch previous exerciſes, whereby ſo many ignorant, and even immoral men are admitted to ordination, in the eſtabliſhment, merely becauſe they come from one of our univerſities, whilſt others are excluded, however well qualified, becauſe they have thus exerciſed, we leave to every impartial perſon to determine.

3. As to our ordaining ſeveral at once; we reply, That the very numerous congregations, in the Counteſs of *Huntingdon*'s connection,

connection, throughout the kingdom, require many ordained miniſters to adminiſter the ordinances of Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper: And the ſame objections to its impropriety might equally apply to the conduct of the Great Head of the Church, and Biſhop of ſouls, in ſending out twelve diſciples at one time, and ſeventy at another time, about a year after, ſee *Luke* vi. 13. and x. 1. to publiſh the goſpel at large, and not to be confined to one place, and one congregation; but to go two and two into *every city and place*, whither He himſelf would come. Therefore inſtead of complaining of ſo many being ordained at once, and ſent to various places, let it be remembered, what our Lord ſays on that very occaſion, even the very firſt words, "The harveſt truly is great, but the "labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harveſt, "that he would ſend forth labourers into his harveſt." So that notwithſtanding this addition of ſeventy to the twelve, the number of labourers would ſtill be ſmall, compared with what would be wanted; He therefore commands them to apply in prayer to the Lord of the harveſt, that he would thruſt out more, who ſhould be faithful labourers in the vineyard. Amen, ſo be it! Lord Jeſus! "Give thou the word, and great ſhall "be the company of thoſe that publiſh it!" Pſ. lxviii. 11.

Thus we have fairly and candidly anſwered every objection that we have heard has been made by any one to our ordination; and now cheerfully make our final appeal to the lord of our conſciences, the alone Head of the Church, and Judge of all the earth; and whilſt favoured as we are, bleſſed be his name, with his preſence and power, we believe and reſt fully aſſured, that the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt us.

SOLI DEO GLORIA!

7 AP 66

FINIS.